

# Healthy Habits Newsletter

December 2023



## 3 Tips For A Healthier Holiday Season

While many of us indulge in good food during the holidays, the winter months don't have to hinder healthy living. As you gather with loved ones to celebrate the season, follow these best practices to maintain positive habits:

**1. Avoid heavy drinking** - Limiting alcohol consumption (or choosing not to drink altogether) can keep you healthy this holiday season. Excess alcohol use increases your risk for a number of health issues, and is especially dangerous if you're getting behind the wheel to drive home from your festivities.

**2. Integrate exercise into your routine** - It's easy to become sedentary during colder months. Staying active not only keeps you healthy, but reduces stress and boosts your mood.

**3. Take care of yourself** - During a time of giving to others, don't forget to manage your own well-being. This includes getting enough sleep, surrounding yourself with a positive support system, and carving out time to relax.

For additional holiday health tips, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

## What Are The Best Ways To Avoid The Flu?

According to the [CDC](#), the most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from this virus is by getting an annual flu shot. In addition to getting vaccinated, these routine habits can help stop the spread of harmful germs:

- Stay home when you are under the weather and avoid those who are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. This is the most common way that the flu virus spreads!
- Routinely wash your hands.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, staying active, and managing your stress.



## 8 Healthy Desserts To Add To Your Menu This Holiday Season

Being mindful about sweet treats doesn't have to be boring. These desserts are delicious and nutritious!

1. Ginger Angel Food Cake
2. Lightened-Up Chocolate Truffle Cheesecake
3. Mini Date-Nut Snowballs
4. Mascarpone with Raspberry and Pineapple
5. Carrot Muffins
6. Chocolate Macaroons
7. Apricot Oat Bars
8. Crunchy Peanut Butter Thins

Find these recipes on  
[FoodNetwork.com!](https://www.foodnetwork.com)

## Getting Enough Sleep Is Essential For Winter Wellness

Busy weeks and hectic schedules are often part of the holiday season. Getting plenty of sleep - especially during the busy month of December - is one of the best ways to reduce stress and prevent illness. According to the [National Sleep Foundation](#), setting a regular sleep schedule will improve your overall health and well-being.

### Why do we need a consistent sleep schedule?

The average adult requires at least seven hours of sleep to feel their best. By setting a consistent schedule each night, you'll feel more alert and focused during the daytime, experience less stress, and improve your heart health.

### What are the best ways to set a sleep schedule?

Between family festivities and preparing for the new year, prioritizing rest can easily fall to the wayside. Even amid a busy season, it's crucial to practice healthy sleep habits such as the following:

- **Utilize reminders and alarms** - Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day is essential for a good night's sleep. Setting an alarm to ensure you follow this routine is a great way to form healthy habits.
- **Be mindful of how you spend your evenings** - Rather than watching TV or scrolling through social media, unwind before bed without screens. Journaling, reading, or listening to calming music can help you feel sleepy.

### What is the best way to remedy sleep deprivation?

If you haven't been getting enough sleep, the National Sleep Foundation says it's worth catching up on rest. Sleeping for an extra one to two hours can help you pay off "sleep debt" so that you're well-rested and able to reset your schedule.

Watch this video from Mayo Clinic on tips for better sleep.

