



get out and play.

Wellness News

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healthy changes
everything:



BlueShield
of Northeastern New York

Holiday Health and Safety

Make a point to celebrate the 2013 holiday season safely and healthily. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend following these tips to ensure a safe and healthy holiday season for you and your loved ones:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and often
- Dress appropriately for the weather
- Stay stress-free by practicing effective stress management techniques
- Travel safely—don't drink and drive and always wear a seat belt
- Be tobacco-free
- Use caution when decorating for the holidays
- Handle and prepare food safely (visit www.fsis.usda.gov for specific food safety information)
- Eat healthy and be active

Did you know?

One string of holiday lights (100 bulbs) uses roughly 45 watts of power.

Do one thing.

Consider the environment—and your finances—when decorating for the holidays. Turn your holiday lights off when the sun is up and when you go to bed.

Seasonal Traditions

This time of year is full of traditions. Some holiday traditions have religious origins, while others have more secular roots:

- Americans send over 1.5 billion Christmas cards every year. The origins of sending holiday greetings dates back to the Middle Ages, but sending cards became commercially popular in the 1840s in England.
- Hanukkah is a relatively minor Jewish holiday. It has been commercialized because it falls near Christmas, but Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are actually more important in the religion.
- Dr. Mualana Karenga, a professor at California State University in 1966, created Kwanzaa. It was created to highlight seven values of African culture: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

Did you know?

Holiday carols can lower blood pressure.

Do one thing.

Embrace the melodies of the season—sing or listen to music under 100 beats per minute to obtain the greatest benefits.



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Get Fit – Cold Weather Exercise

Don't let the colder weather put a damper on your fitness routine! If you enjoy outdoor exercise, remember to dress in thin layers when the temperature drops. If you don't, you could actually end up dressing too warmly. Always cover your hands, feet, and ears. Keep an active watch on the forecast, and if dangerous conditions (including extremely low temperatures) are present, plan to take a day off or move your workout indoors.

Did you know?

It's just as easy to get sunburned in the winter as it is in the summer.

Do one thing.

Protect your skin with SPF 30 or greater sunscreen all year long.

Eat Fit – Holiday Food Guidelines

'Tis the season for holiday gatherings. Sometimes it seems as though the holiday season is more about eating good food and less about spending quality time with loved ones. Don't stray from good eating habits this year. Keep these guidelines in mind as you plan your holiday gatherings:

- Because holiday foods tend to be rich, try eating a little less than you normally would without allowing yourself to get too hungry.
- The majority of the food you eat should have nutritional value. Try to avoid eating too many empty calories.
- Eat smaller meals every 3-4 hours. Include a lean protein and a complex carbohydrate at every meal.
- Think before you eat. It's always a good idea to do some planning before you have your next meal or snack—especially if you are eating out.

Did you know?

There are 3,500 calories in a pound of fat.

Do one thing.

Eat 250 fewer calories and burn 250 more calories with exercise each day, and you can lose a pound a week.

Live Fit – Time Management = Stress Management

Don't let the busyness that surrounds the holidays add unnecessary stress to your life. Implement the following effective time management strategies to help keep this holiday season—or any season—stress-free:

- Plan each day
- Prioritize your tasks, and say no to non-essential tasks
- When possible, delegate
- Limit/minimize distractions
- Break large, daunting tasks into smaller, manageable tasks

Did you know?

Getting plenty of sleep, exercising, and eating healthy, nutritious meals can help you better manage your time.

Do one thing.

To learn how to incorporate healthy habits into your lifestyle, contact one of our health coaches at 1-877-878-8785, option 2.

For more healthy tips:

Call our health coaches at 1-877-878-8785, press 2.



Chocolate, Almond, and Jam Thumbprint Cookies Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups chopped semisweet or bittersweet chocolate
- 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup honey
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup white whole-wheat flour
- 2/3 cup sweetened dried cranberries coarsely chopped
- 1 1/3 cups chopped toasted almond slivers, divided
- 1/2 cup cherry jam or preserves

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Grind chocolate in a food processor until coarsely ground. Transfer to a mixing bowl and add cocoa, sugar, baking powder, and salt; stir until blended. With an electric mixer on low, then medium speed, add eggs, then honey, oil, and vanilla, and beat until combined. Beat in all-purpose and whole-wheat flour, then cranberries, and 2/3 cup almonds until thoroughly incorporated (the dough will be stiff).
3. Divide the dough into quarters. Roll each quarter into a 9-inch "log." Slice the log into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball. Place the remaining 2/3 cup chopped almonds on a small plate. Roll each ball in the nuts, pressing as needed to help them adhere. Place about 1 1/2 inches apart on a prepared baking sheet. Press your thumb into the center of each cookie. Fill with about 1/2 teaspoon of jam.
4. Bake the cookies 8 to 12 minutes, until firm around the edge. Let stand for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool to room temperature.

Makes 4 dozen cookies

Nutrition:

Per cookie: 91 calories; 4g fat; 8mg cholesterol; 14g carbohydrates; 2g protein; 6g fiber; 37mg sodium

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