

# Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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## Tis The Season, Healthy Begins Here

**K**eeping you and your children safe and healthy is your top priority. Sometimes the stress from seasonal celebrations can result in big headaches. But, a lot of other things about seasonal celebrations can impact your health as well. Follow these simple steps to make this year and the year to come your healthiest ever.

### Food Portion Control

Food portion sizes today are far bigger than they were in the past, which means we're taking in far more calories than we realize. Understanding healthy and correct portion sizes is critical to long-term weight management. It's been proven that people who plan their meals and activities in advance are the most successful in meeting their weight goals.

### Portion Distortion

Most restaurants serve 2-4 times the recommended serving sizes.



You could be adding more than 100 extra calories to your plate resulting in a weight gain of ten or more pounds per year!

### Meet your goals:

- Step 1. Set your goal and calculate portion recommendations.
- Step 2. Plan your foods and activities.
- Step 3. Follow your personal plan.

### Tis the season to be safe

Cooks across the country are making plans for seasonal feasts that include everyone's favorite dishes, from corn bread stuffing to pumpkin pie. Friends and families are invited, and excitement is in the air. Food safety is probably not the first thing you think about when

planning a big dinner. But to keep your gathering from being memorable in the wrong way, it's important to take steps to protect your guests from food-borne illnesses.

It takes skill, timing and organization to pull off a healthy meal with all the dishes kept at proper temperatures so bacteria won't have a chance to grow.

To make sure your dinner is not only delicious but also as safe as possible, here are some suggestions.

**Have a master plan.** Consider your refrigerator, freezer and oven space and how you'll manage to keep hot foods at 140 degrees or higher and cold foods at 40 degrees or below.

**Cook to proper temperature -- and use a thermometer.** There is simply no other way to determine that food has been cooked enough to kill bacteria. Remember, keep hot food hot and cold food cold.

**Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of preparation.** Leaving food out too long is one of the biggest food safety problems. When food sits out for more than two hours in the danger zone -- above 40 degrees and below 140 degrees -- it is prime for bacterial growth.

**Wash your hands thoroughly and often -- before, during, and after food preparation.** Simply washing hands is one of the easiest ways to minimize bacterial contamination and keep your food safe. Experts suggest washing with hot water and soap, up to your wrists and between your fingers, for approximately 20 seconds.

**Wash all fresh produce.** Wash even prepackaged greens, to minimize potential bacterial contamination. Make sure kitchen counters, sponges, cutting boards, and knives are all well scrubbed.

## **Exercise To Feel Good**

After all those great meals, make this season an enjoyable and successful one by adding some exercise to your seasonal routine. Some people love exercise others hate it. For some, fitness is torture, for others it's an addiction. Either extreme -- not getting enough or getting too much -- can backfire.

Exercise is good for your body, mind, and future success. On the physical side, exercise can help you feel strong and agile. If you exercise regularly, you may notice your clothes fit differently. Exercising your body also strengthens your mind.

Exercise falls into a couple of categories. Some strengthen your heart. Others strengthen your bones and muscles. It's a good idea to mix things up. Cross training works different types of exercise into your routine and helps build overall fitness without injury.

## **Fitness Recommendations**

Lack of time is the reason most people don't exercise.

People usually don't think to count day-to-day activities (yard work, laundry, etc) as healthy calorie burners.

**Aerobic exercise** includes any activity you can do continuously for 30 minutes that increases your heart rate.

**Strength training** includes lifting weights, working with resistance bands, many kinds of yoga, and rock climbing.

**Core body exercises** include sit-ups, leg lifts, and back exercises. Regular exercise that strengthens your trunk, pelvis, and lower back also improves balance and stability.

You don't have to change your whole life to get the benefits of exercise. It only takes a brisk, 30-minute walk or similar activity, five times a week to make a difference. Getting out there and doing something you enjoy is all it takes.

Source - WebMD.com

# **Benefits Corner**

## **Reminders**

Your CHP plan has Emergency Care Coverage that you may need during the holidays when providers and urgent care centers are closed. If it is an emergency procedure, the CHP Plan will cover the procedure at the in-network level for both in-network and out-of-network providers.

In addition, don't forget about the 24/7 NurseLine (1-800-337-4770), where you can talk to a registered nurse who is trained to help you make more informed decisions about your health situation.

If you are traveling out of state or out of the country during the holidays and do not need emergency care, but need to see a provider, please call the Customer Service number located on the back of your card (1-800-810-2583) to locate a provider that is part of the National Blue Cross Blue Shield network to receive in-network level of coverage.