



# HEALTH AWARENESS

November 2024

## THE GIFT OF A HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season is filled with a flurry of activities, indulgent meals, and festivities, but it can also bring stress and temptations that challenge our well-being. This year, CTSI encourages everyone to embrace a balanced approach to enjoy the holidays while prioritizing physical, mental, and emotional health. Taking steps to stay healthy can help you fully engage in holiday gatherings, set positive examples, and enter the new year feeling your best. Below are strategies to help you maintain health, happiness, and balance this season.



### BALANCED EATING WITHOUT DEPRIVATION

Holiday meals often feature rich, high-calorie foods that can lead to overindulgence. However, enjoying festive treats in moderation is possible with a few mindful tips.

- **Control Portions:** Focus on smaller portions of high-calorie items and fill the rest of your plate with vegetables, fruits, and lean proteins.
- **Practice the 80/20 Rule:** Aim for 80% healthy, nutrient-rich foods and leave 20% for indulgent treats. This balance allows enjoyment without excessive calorie intake.
- **Mindful Eating:** Savor each bite by eating slowly and attentively. This will help you feel satisfied with smaller amounts.



### KEEP MOVING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Maintaining regular physical activity can help offset the additional calories and reduce stress. While gym time might be challenging to schedule, there are creative ways to stay active.

- **Walking Breaks:** Take 10-15 minute walks throughout the day, especially after meals, to help control digestion and blood sugar.
- **Active Gatherings:** Encourage friends and family to join you for holiday-themed activities like ice skating, dancing, or a neighborhood stroll.
- **At-Home Workouts:** Use short online workout videos or stretch sessions to fit physical activity into your schedule.



### STAY HYDRATED DURING COLD MONTHS

Hydration often gets overlooked during colder months, but staying well-hydrated is essential to maintaining energy, skin health, and digestive function.

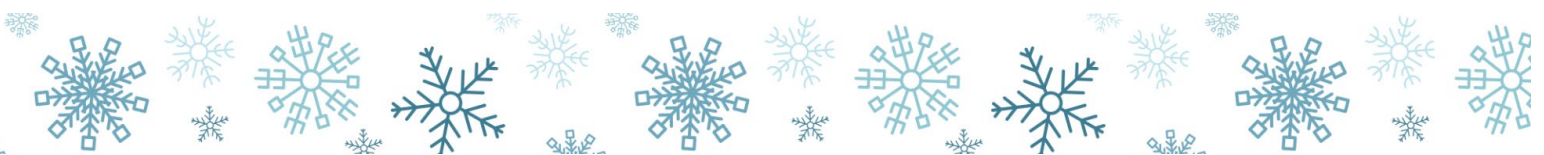
- **Drink Water Consistently:** Aim for at least eight glasses daily, especially if you consume alcoholic beverages. Consider setting reminders if it's challenging to keep up.
- **Balance Alcohol and Water:** For every alcoholic drink, drink a glass of water to stay hydrated and reduce the likelihood of dehydration the next day.
- **Incorporate Hydrating Foods:** Oranges, cucumbers, and watermelon can supplement your water intake and keep you feeling fresh.



### QUALITY SLEEP SUPPORTS IMMUNITY

Sleep is often sacrificed during busy holidays, but quality rest is essential to immune function and stress management.

- **Set a Sleep Routine:** To keep your body clock steady, try going to bed and waking up at consistent times, even on weekends.
- **Practice Winding-Down Rituals:** Engage in relaxing activities like reading or gentle stretching to signal your body to rest.
- **Limit Alcohol Before Bed:** While alcohol might help you feel drowsy, it can disrupt the quality of sleep. Try to finish drinking a few hours before bedtime for better rest.





## EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR HOLIDAY STRESS

The holidays can bring emotional highs and lows; stress is common with increased obligations, social gatherings, and financial pressures.

- **Set Boundaries:** Be realistic about how much you can handle and communicate your limits to loved ones.
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Taking a few moments each day to practice deep breathing, meditation, or grounding exercises can reduce stress and improve focus.
- **Prioritize Connections:** Engage meaningfully with family and friends, focusing on quality over quantity. Sometimes, saying “no” to social events is okay to preserve energy for yourself.



## MINDFUL SOCIALIZING AND CELEBRATION

Celebrations and gatherings are essential to the holiday season but don't have to center entirely on food and drink.

- **Focus on Non-Food Activities:** Organize holiday games, activities, or gift exchanges to shift focus away from meals.
- **Eat Before Parties:** If attending gatherings where rich foods will be served, consider eating a light, nutritious snack beforehand to prevent overindulging.
- **Be Selective with Treats:** Rather than sampling everything, choose a few items you truly enjoy and savor them.

## SETTING INTENTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

As the year ends, it's the perfect time to set intentions for health and well-being in the new year. Reflecting on your habits from this past year can be a helpful starting point—take note of what health practices worked for you and what didn't, and use these insights to set achievable goals. Begin by choosing one or two small, attainable changes you can build on throughout the year, such as committing to walking daily, eating more vegetables, or proactively managing stress. Sharing your goals with friends, family, or colleagues can also help keep you accountable. Starting the new year with a health-conscious mindset can set the stage for lasting wellness.



## BENEFITS CORNER

# lark

### Diabetes Prevention with Lark Health

Consider taking proactive steps toward a healthier future this holiday season with the Lark Health Diabetes Prevention Program, available at no extra cost through Anthem. Prediabetes affects millions of Americans, many of whom may not even know they're at risk.

Lark Health offers personalized support, including a free wireless scale and 24/7 access to digital health coaching through the Lark app. This program can help you improve your health habits by guiding you to eat healthier, increase activity, manage stress, and even sleep better. Take a one-minute survey through the Sydney Health app to determine if you're at risk and start making minor changes to improve your health and prevent diabetes. Embrace this opportunity to invest in your wellness today!

CTSI staff can assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at (303) 861-0507.

**Please join us on November 21, 2024, for a virtual Lunch & Learn presentation to learn more about Lark Health's weight management program.**