

The holiday season is in full swing, and while it's a time of joy and connection, it's also a time when our health can sometimes take a backseat to festivities, travel, and stress. For November and December, we're bringing you some short essential health tips to help you stay strong, balanced, and energized throughout the holiday season.

### Eat Mindfully During the Holidays

With so many tempting treats, holiday lunches, and feasts, it's easy to overeat. Mindful eating can help you stay in tune with your body's signals and make more conscious choices.

- Slow down: Take the time to enjoy each bite and savor the flavors.
- Focus on balance: Aim for a variety of foods, especially those that nourish you, like vegetables, fruits, and lean proteins.
- Listen to your body: Stop eating when you're satisfied, not stuffed.
- Fill up on vegetables: Include a variety of colorful veggies in your meals. Try roasted Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, or a fresh salad to balance heavier dishes.
- Portion control: Instead of overindulging in every dish, take small portions of your favorites and really savor the flavors.
- Healthy swaps: Make lighter versions of traditional recipes (i.e. use Greek yogurt instead of sour cream, or swap sugar for a natural sweetener such as monk fruit).

### Holiday Hydration

We often drink less water during the winter months, especially when it's cold and we're indulging in sugary or caffeinated drinks. But staying hydrated is essential for maintaining energy levels and supporting your body's natural functions.



- Infused water: If you find plain water boring, try infusing it



### Warm Spiced Apple Cider

Enjoy a cozy, non-alcoholic holiday drink that warms you up and supports your immune system!

#### Ingredients:

- 4 cups apple cider
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 5 cloves
- 2 slices of fresh ginger
- Orange slices for garnish

#### Directions:

In a pot, combine the apple cider, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and ginger slices.

Heat over medium heat for about 5-10 minutes, or until warm (do not bring to a boil).

Remove from heat and strain out the spices.

Serve in a mug with a slice of orange for garnish.

with fresh fruits like berries, citrus, or cucumber for added flavor.

- Warm beverages: Herbal teas or warm lemon water are excellent alternatives to sugary drinks and help keep you hydrated. Look for alternatives to all the sugar in lattes and festive drinks. Example: Try ½ the usual syrup and add 1 stevia to give you flavor & sweetness but less sugar.
- Mind your alcohol intake: If you're enjoying festive cocktails, be sure to balance them with water to stay hydrated and avoid a post-party hangover.

## Keep Moving: Holiday Fitness Tips

Finding time to exercise during the busy holiday season can be challenging, but even short bursts of activity can help you stay energized and reduce stress.



- Take a walk after meals: Not only will this help with digestion, but it's also a great way to get fresh air and clear your mind. 20 – 30 minutes helps a lot!
- Incorporate quick home workouts: If you're pressed for time, 10-15 minutes of bodyweight exercises like squats, lunges, or push-ups as well as yoga, stretching, or home workout videos can be effective. Even marching around the house counts!
- Holiday fun fitness: Try ice skating, dancing around the house, or a family snowball fight or sledding to get your heart rate up while enjoying the season.

## Recharge with Quality Sleep and Rest

With busy schedules, late nights, and travel, sleep often takes a backseat during the holidays. But getting enough rest is essential for maintaining energy, focus, and immune function.



- Stick to a sleep routine: Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even when you're traveling.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine: A warm bath, light reading,



## Lemon Herb Roasted Salmon

Salmon is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and makes for a light yet satisfying holiday main course.

### Ingredients:

- 4 salmon fillets
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme or rosemary, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Place the salmon fillets on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
- Drizzle with olive oil and top with lemon slices, minced garlic, and fresh herbs.
- Season with salt and pepper, then roast for 12-15 minutes, or until salmon flakes easily with a fork.
- Serve with a side of roasted vegetables or a light salad.

or relaxation techniques such as deep breathing to help you unwind before sleep.

- Limit screen time: Avoid bright screens such as on your phone, tablet, or TV for at least an hour before bed.
- Avoid caffeine late in the day: Instead, opt for a warm herbal tea like chamomile or peppermint in the evening to relax.
- Get enough magnesium: Approximately 400 mg for men and 350 for women is what we need. Talk to your healthcare provider about supplementing to enhance sleep. There are several different types of magnesium with varying absorption

## Mindful Moments and Self-Care

The holiday season can be stressful—shopping, travel, and family gatherings can take a toll on your mental and emotional health. Practicing mindfulness and making time for self-care are great ways to manage stress.



- **Mindful moments:** Take a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness. Focus on your breath, engage in gratitude, or simply pause to appreciate the present moment.
- **Set boundaries:** It's okay to say "no" to events or commitments that don't bring you joy or that might overwhelm you. Prioritize activities that make you feel good.
- **Get outdoors:** Nature has been shown to reduce stress and improve mood. Whether it's a walk in the park or hiking in the woods, get outside and enjoy some fresh air.
- **Practice deep breathing:** Take a few minutes each day to do some simple deep breathing exercises to calm your mind.
- **Take a break:** If you're feeling overwhelmed, step outside for a few minutes of fresh air or find a quiet space to reset.

## Practice Gratitude for A Positive Mindset

The holiday season is a great time to reflect on what you're thankful for. Cultivating gratitude not only boosts mood, but it can also improve your overall health by reducing stress and enhancing emotional well-being.

- Express your gratitude: Take time to thank those around you, whether it's a friend, colleague, or family member. A simple



## Cauliflower Mash with Garlic and Parmesan

A lighter alternative to mashed potatoes that still delivers creamy, garlicky goodness.

### Ingredients:

- 1 medium head of cauliflower, chopped into florets
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

### Directions:

- Steam the cauliflower florets and garlic cloves until tender, about 10-12 minutes.
- In a food processor or with an immersion blender, blend the cauliflower and garlic with olive oil and Parmesan cheese until smooth and creamy.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Transfer to a serving dish, garnish with fresh parsley, and serve hot.



“thank you” can brighten someone’s day and strengthen your relationships.

- Volunteer: Help out at a local shelter, food bank, or charity event.
- Spread kindness: Simple gestures like sending a card, donating, or helping a neighbor can lift your spirits and theirs. Research shows that helping others can have a positive impact on our well-being.
- Give Compliments: Offer genuine compliments to those around you. Compliment their appearance, their efforts in organizing the gathering, or their kindness and warmth.

## Gratitude Gift Ideas

The holiday season is the perfect time to show gratitude to the people in your life who make a difference—whether it’s a friend, family member, colleague, or mentor. If you’re looking for meaningful ways to express your thanks, gratitude gifts are an excellent way to show appreciation and spread positivity. Here are some thoughtful and heartwarming gift ideas that will make anyone feel truly appreciated:

### Personalized Thank You Notes

A heartfelt, handwritten note can make a lasting impact. Take a few moments to express why you are thankful for someone and the specific ways they’ve made a difference in your life.

### Wellness Gift Sets

Wellness-themed gifts are not only thoughtful but also encourage well-being and mindfulness. Examples:

- A set of essential oils or a diffuser
- A cozy blanket with a soothing tea assortment
- A spa kit with bath salts, candles, and moisturizing lotion
- A yoga mat or mindfulness journal

### Custom Gifts

Personalized gifts are a great way to celebrate a connection and make your gift-giving even more special.

- Engraved jewelry (e.g., a necklace with a meaningful message or initials)
- A custom photo book filled with memories and moments shared
- A personalized mug or calendar featuring photos that remind



## Sweet Potato & Kale Salad

### Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 bunch kale, stems removed, chopped
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup roasted sunflower seeds
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Toss sweet potato cubes with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast on a baking sheet for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway through.
- In a small bowl, whisk together tahini, apple cider vinegar, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt until smooth.
- In a large bowl, massage the kale with a little olive oil and a pinch of salt for 2-3 minutes until tender.
- Once the sweet potatoes are roasted, add them to the kale along with the pomegranate seeds, sunflower seeds, and red onion.
- Drizzle the tahini dressing over the salad and toss gently. Serve warm or at room temperature.

- them of happy times
- Monogrammed towels or robes

## Experience Gifts

Sometimes, the best way to show your gratitude is by offering the gift of an experience—something memorable that you can share together. These gifts offer lasting memories rather than material items. Ideas -

- Cooking class or wine-tasting experience
- Concert, theater, or event ticket
- Weekend getaway or spa retreat
- Virtual class, such as painting, photography, or cooking lessons



## Plant or Succulent

A plant or succulent symbolizes growth, renewal, and longevity, making it the perfect gratitude gift. It also adds a personal touch to their home or office and serves as a lasting reminder of your appreciation.

- Potted succulent with a small note of thanks
- Bonsai tree that requires nurturing and care
- Flowering plant like an orchid, symbolizing beauty and grace
- An herb garden kit for those who love cooking

## Charitable Donation in Their Name

For those who value generosity, a donation to a cause they care about can be a meaningful gift that spreads gratitude and kindness to others. Suggestions:

- Donate to their favorite charity or organization
- Sponsor an animal in need at a local shelter
- Fund a scholarship or provide support to a community project in their name

## Subscription Services

Gift them the opportunity to experience something new or keep up with their interests, hobbies, or passions throughout the year – such as:

- A monthly subscription box (like a wellness box, book club, or gourmet snacks)
- A subscription to a meditation app, like Headspace, Calm, or Abide
- A streaming service or audiobook membership



## Apple and Pear Smoothie

A fruity and refreshing drink that's perfect for a post-meal treat or breakfast during the holidays.

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 pear, cored and chopped
- 1/2 apple, cored and chopped
- 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional)
- Ice cubes (optional, for a colder drink)

### Directions:

- Place the pear, apple, almond milk, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a blender.
- Blend until smooth, adding more almond milk if necessary to reach your desired consistency.
- Taste and adjust sweetness by adding honey or maple syrup, if desired.
- Pour into a glass and enjoy immediately. You can also add ice for a colder, refreshing smoothie.