



Nutritious  
& Delicious

# HEALTH MATTERS!



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## Healthy Eating Through The Party Season

The party season is nearly upon us, which means that our bodies are about to be subjected to weeks of alcohol, late nights and rich food that will put a strain on the body. So do some damage limitation and support your body with my following suggestions.

**Do not diet:** People often skip meals in the knowledge that they will soon be filling up on party food. This is a bad idea, as cutting down and then indulging puts strain on the system and disrupts blood-sugar levels, which means that when you do eventually eat there is a risk of overcompensating. Also when food is severely restricted, the body becomes stressed and the adrenal glands produce steroids, lowering the immune system's performance. On top of this, the body isn't getting essential nutrients needed to maintain immunity, making harder for us to bounce back from a heavy night.

**Eating clean:** It may seem obvious, but eating clean for a week will do you some good. Focus on whole, natural and unprocessed foods, making lean protein and fresh vegetables the key ingredients in each meal. Limit acid-forming foods such as refined sugar, wheat and dairy, and increase healthy fats such as avocado, salmon and nuts.

**Hydration:** Consuming even small amounts of alcohol can lead to dehydration. Make sure that you drink plenty of water and herbal tea on the day of each party to hydrate your body, and especially after. Try to stay on top of your hydration levels, which you can do throughout the day before an event. Aim for up to 1.5ltrs per day.

**Digestive support:** Include as much fibre into your diet as possible. This will cleanse your bowels before a heavy month of eating and drinking, which will ensure that you can digest the large amounts of food and drink that you will consume over the festive period effectively. Help your gut recover as well by taking a good quality mixed strain probiotic and L-Glutamine (fuel source for your gut cells) supplements for a few weeks over the party season, as this helps support gut function before you've even started to party. Good fibre sources are wholegrains, pulses and vegetables.

**Liver and skin support:** The liver is a vital accessory organ to the digestive system, by processing all the food and alcohol that enters the blood stream. It is also a powerful detoxifier that needs to be supported by the right nutrition. So, help your liver cope by including some of the following foods in your diet:

- **Protein (lean)** – provides the essential amino acids needed for all stages of detoxification.
- **Garlic** – helps your liver activate enzymes that can flush out toxins. It also has a high amount of allicin and selenium, two natural compounds that aid in liver cleansing.
- **Grapefruit** – juice can help your liver flush out carcinogens and toxins. This fruit is also high in vitamin C (antioxidant properties) and supports detoxification (**take caution consuming grapefruit juice when using certain medications**).
- **Beetroot** – are high in plant-flavonoids, which can improve the overall functions of your liver.
- **Leafy Greens** – like spinach and kale have the ability to neutralize metals, chemicals and pesticides that may be in our foods, and act as a protective mechanism for the liver.
- **Green Tea** – is full of plant antioxidants known as catechins, which have been known to improve the functions of the liver.
- **Avocados** – adding more avocados to your diet can help your body produce a type of antioxidant called glutathione, which is needed for our liver to filter out harmful materials like alcohol.
- **Cruciferous Vegetables** – such as broccoli or kale also increase the amount of glucosinolates (organic compounds) in our body that help create enzyme production for digestion.
- **Turmeric** – is anti-inflammatory and can help our bodies digest fats and stimulate bile production and can also act as a natural form of detox for your liver, as it is full of valuable antioxidants.

**Adrenal gland and stress support:** Supporting your adrenal glands - that produce stress hormones - is key through stressful periods, such as eating and drinking your way through the festive season! Stress seriously affects digestion and can make you feel washed out, so stock up on:

- **B Vitamins** – can help you feel more energetic after a stressful episode. Choose leafy green vegetables, oats, avocados, nuts, seeds, pulses, meat, fish & dairy products, etc.

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## Adrenal gland and stress support (cont.):

- **Vitamin C** – The adrenal glands contain the largest store of vitamin C in the body and are important in the production of stress hormones – helping us deal with stressors effectively. Foods packed with vitamin C are: citrus fruits, tomatoes, peppers, kiwi fruit, berries, leafy green vegetables, etc.
- **Magnesium** – is vital for proper adrenal function and our ability to soothe and calm ourselves. It is found in almonds, avocados, fish, lean red meat or millet.
- **Chromium** – is pivotal in blood sugar support and is found in brown rice, dried beans, chicken, eggs and mushrooms.
- **Siberian ginseng** – can also help boost energy by regulating adrenal function, not depleting it.

## Additional extras:

- **Cut down on alcohol:** Just before it gets a crazy next month, limit yourself to two units a week now, you'll feel better and your skin will look brighter, when the partying starts.
- Alcohol can disrupt the integrity of your gut, and affect immunity, so take 5g of L-Glutamine and 2g of vitamin C before bedtime after a heavy night, to also help prevent a hangover.
- A great way to up your vitamin intake without having an entire head of broccoli for dinner is to put heaps of green veg, and a little fruit if you need the sweetness, into a nutri-blender.
- Co-enzyme Q10 is a nutrient that every body cell requires to produce energy, so it could perk up your natural energy levels very quickly.
- Remember that champagne, prosecco, or vodka with soda water and lime are better than calorie-laden cocktails or wine.
- Avoid caffeine after 12pm on the day of each party. It may pep you up but it places a strain on your liver, an organ that needs to be kept in tip-top condition.

**Sleep:** Long workdays and present shopping, combined with late nights are unavoidable in the run-up to Christmas. So if you want to sparkle at parties, make sure you get enough sleep! Not only will you feel more alert but it may help you process alcohol better. If the body is tired it impairs motor skills and leads to higher levels of stress. Not everyone needs eight hours but it's a bad idea to regularly have fewer than five. You can try to stock up on sleep with a pre-party snooze, but make sure you leave at least 30 minutes between waking up and going out.

**Exercise:** While being fit won't cure your hangover, it can help it go away faster. Exercise not only can help cut down on body fat before you start eating more food, but it will also kick start your metabolism and boost immunity – perfect for the toxic load the body is put under. Moderate exercise (3 x 30 minute sessions a week) can have an immune-stimulating effect by boosting circulation, flushing the immune system's white blood cells around the body, and by increasing levels of hormones in the blood, which further improves immunity. Swimming, cycling, running or brisk-walking are all recommended.

## Before you go out (pre-night out)

- Line your stomach with healthy snacks, including some almonds and an apple or a good quality nut butter or hummus on oatcakes.
- Ideally you should eat a small meal before going out to prevent gorging on unhealthy party food.
- Include foods such as salmon or chicken (lean proteins) with a little brown rice and avocado.
- Eating healthy fats slows the digestion process down, meaning that it will take longer for alcohol to be absorbed by your body.

## Recovery (for the day after)

- Contrary to popular belief a fry up is not the answer, as it can further put your body under stress, by providing unwanted extra calories, salt and saturated fats.
- Starting the day with hot water and lemon juice followed by scrambled eggs on toast, a banana and detox green tea can better prepare your body for the slow day ahead.

**Please Note:** This handout should only be used as a guide to help inform you as to the diet and lifestyle modifications that **may** help to support your body whilst drinking alcohol and eating rich foods, especially for a prolonged period. It is **not** suggesting that you need to drink alcohol and eat rich foods. If you think you may need any help with any of these factors then please contact your GP, or a qualified clinical nutritionist.