

Leader TOOLS

Keeping participants
focused on positive
lifestyle choices

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2017

HEALTHY HOLIDAYS



The holiday season is here, and with that comes the temptation to let our healthy habits – such as regular exercise and nutritious meals – fall to the wayside. Plan now to make this a Healthy Holiday season, one that leads you into 2018 feeling good and ready to face the new year!

HEALTHY HOLIDAY EATING

There is no doubt that the holidays put more focus on food; sometimes we need a few reminders, as well as strategies to prepare us to stay on course. Real Simple magazine shares 9 Healthy Holiday-Eating Strategies that provide tips for overcoming various temptations that might throw you off course. Strategy 8: Keep Up the Exercise shares a good reminder to your class participants during this busy and hectic time of year. Whereas Strategy 9: Choose Your Indulgences reminds us that feeling deprived is not the answer. For example, choose foods that are “truly special and unique to the season” and enjoy them, in moderation of course!

Read the
full article
here!



Resource provided by the
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FOODS THAT MAY INCREASE INFLAMMATION

The foods that you eat can increase inflammation within the body. This is something we all want to avoid, but especially those living with many types of arthritis. According to the Arthritis Foundation website, you should consider these 8 foods that may trigger more inflammation, and adjust your diet accordingly.

- **Sugar.** This one is even harder to eliminate during the holidays when everyone is baking sweet treats to share. When purchasing packaged foods, look for ingredients that end with “ose” as this indicates a type of sugar (e.g. fructose and sucrose).
- **Saturated Fats.** Shown to trigger fat tissue inflammation, which is an indicator for heart disease and also worsens arthritis inflammation. Mostly derived from animal sources; the more saturated a fat is, the more solid it is at room temperature.
- **Trans Fats.** Known to trigger systemic inflammation. Read food labels and avoid foods with partially hydrogenated oils listed.
- **Omega-6 Fatty Acids.** Although an essential fatty acid, the body needs a healthy balance between omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. Excess consumption can cause the body to produce pro-inflammatory chemicals.
- **Refined Carbohydrates.** White flour, white rice, white potatoes, and many cereals are high-glycemic index foods that may produce chemicals in the body that increase inflammation.
- **MSG.** Mono-sodium glutamate. This food additive can trigger two inflammation pathways (and all affect liver health).
- **Gluten and Casein.** Gluten is found in wheat, rye and barley; casein is found in dairy products. Some people with arthritis may have gluten sensitivity or celiac disease.
- **Aspartame.** An artificial sweetener that some people are sensitive to, which can cause an inflammatory response.
- **Alcohol.** Affecting the liver and other organs, excess alcohol can cause inflammation.

Learn more in the full article, and find helpful hints for an arthritis-friendly diet at the Arthritis Foundation website.



WHAT TO EAT ON AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET

Now that you have a good idea of what to avoid, what foods can you enjoy on an anti-inflammatory diet? According to WebMD, “anti-inflammatory foods are those that any mainstream nutrition expert would encourage you to eat.” Include plenty of fruits and vegetables (choose lots of color), whole grains (brown rice and oats are good choices), beans and nuts (plant-based protein sources), fatty fish (salmon, tuna and sardines are high in omega-3 fatty acids), and fresh herbs and spices.

CLICK HERE to find the best beverages, fruits, vegetables, fish, grains, nuts & seeds, and oils for arthritis at the Arthritis Foundation website.

Speaking of spices, the Arthritis Foundation lists the following for their anti-inflammatory benefits. So, go ahead, spice up your meals!

- **Garlic.** Opt for fresh garlic to avoid preservatives; also, processing may reduce its strength.
- **Tumeric.** Popular in Indian cuisine, this spice is best when consumed with black pepper, which helps the body absorb it better.
- **Ginger.** In addition to anti-inflammatory properties, some studies have shown this spice to reduce osteoarthritis symptoms. Best used fresh.
- **Cinnamon.** The antioxidant properties help inhibit cell damage. Combined with other foods, it may offer a cumulative anti-inflammatory effect.
- **Cayenne.** Chili peppers bring up the heat to any dish, start out with a small amount.



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HOLIDAY CLASS TIPS

Keeping participants motivated, engaged, and returning to class is a challenge that we face throughout the year. However, the holiday season can make it even harder because schedules seem to get busier, days more hectic, and lives more stressful. Keep your participants on track with regular exercise with these following tips and tools from your colleagues:

Pam DeCourcy, contributing author for the AEA AF Program Leader manual, teaches both AFAP and AFEP classes. Her participants are looking forward to this year's Holiday Traditions:

Each participant has an opportunity to share a tradition or special holiday memory with the class by bringing a picture or something that relates to the tradition (such as a recipe for a favorite holiday food), or by simply sharing the story. This can be from childhood or something more current – perhaps even something the family just recently started. Maybe it's something special the participant is doing with his/her grandchildren. We will begin our Holiday Traditions just after Thanksgiving and run through New Year's. To keep it organized, and allow everyone the opportunity to be in the limelight, participants will pick a specific day to share to their story. This allows everyone to feel included, regardless of how they celebrate their holidays.



HOLIDAY CLASS TIPS

Helen Tilden, Associate Editor for the AEA AF Program Leader manual, shares the following ideas:

The holidays are coming and so is the stress! Encourage participants to maintain their exercise schedule and set aside “down time” each day during the holidays to reduce stress. Deep breathing and visual imagery are great options, but don’t overlook the use of games, puzzles and riddles.

Distribute cross word puzzles or word search for “homework” that is fun. There are many sites, but two excellent ones are puzzle-maker.com and armoredpenguin.com. Some sites have puzzles ready to print out, but it is easy to design a puzzle individualized for your class. The directions are on the site and it helps to make a list of words before you begin. Examples are “snow”, “winter”, “mittens”, etc. Take the additional step to print out the answers after and have fun at the next class giving answers if any were missed.

If you are short of time or your printer is out of ink, a very simple puzzle to make is a game of finding words in a word. For the holidays, use words such as “Happy New Year”, “Fruitcake” or “Happy Holidays”. Put the word on the top of a blank sheet of paper and start the list with 2-3 words as indicated below. Be prepared for the avid Scrabble® players in your class – they will want to know if 2-letter words, proper names and foreign words are allowed. Don’t forget a small prize for the most words or the longest word (see the 8-letter word below!)

Fruitcake = kite, fit, fake, take and 200+ more

Happy Holidays = halo, pay, hail, sod and 100+ more

Happy New Year = pear, pare, hay, wear and 150+ more including “anywhere”



Joyanna Wyne, an AFAP Program Leader, recognizes the importance of developing meaningful connections.

Exercise is at the top of every list of ways to stay healthy and happy, but so is the importance of making meaningful connections with other people. In fact, a significant benefit of the AEA Arthritis Foundation program is that it can break the cycle of social isolation. Over the years, I have been heartened to see so many friendships formed in all my classes. People who may have been lonely have gained companions for sharing meals, shopping, playing cards or traveling. They enjoy coming to exercise with their friends. This year marked a milestone when a couple who met in class got married. We all felt like matchmakers!

The holidays are the perfect time for socializing, and one class has made it a tradition. It began with an invitation to a potluck at a classmate’s home. Sampling the many delicious dishes, people kept saying, “I wish I had this recipe.” That was my inspiration for a class cookbook. Thanks to many helping hands, we created a wonderful keepsake. Even those who no longer cook said they enjoy reading the recipes. Over the years, we have partied in homes, restaurants and our community room. Volunteers always contact folks who can no longer come to class (having a roster helps!) and provide transportation. It’s a great way to stay in touch, and I always take lots of pictures to share. One time we received a unique gift of a panorama picture of all of us! This holiday season, I encourage you and your classes to celebrate with a cherished tradition or create a new one!



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