NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
RETIREMENT SYSTEM

NDPERS Wellness
building healthy members

Coordinator Newsletter

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Learn tips from Joan Enderle on how to survive a holiday meal.

Top 'Ate' tips for surviving a holiday meal

Joan Enderle and the American Heart Association have provided these helpful tips to keep you on track during the holidays. Enderle is the Go Red Director for North Dakota.

1. Eat beforehand. As tempted as you may be to do the "I'm-going to-save-all-my-calories-for-the-big-meal" thing, don't. By the time the meal comes around, you'll dive in, making unwise choices and likely overdo it on high-calorie, high-fat items. Instead, have a smart breakfast (some oatmeal and fruit, maybe) and a light lunch. Then, you'll be less likely to attack the big meal like a hungry wildebeest.

2. Move it. Activity is key. Plan physical activity into the day such as sledding, ice skating, walking or playing with the kids.

3. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. Drink a good amount of water all day long. Not only is it good for you, it'll keep you from snacking when you really just need some H2O. Go easy on non-water drinks, especially ones full of sugar and/or alcohol. You don't want to tack on a ton of extra calories with a big meal ahead of you.

4. Pitch in. Not only will your friends and family ooh and ah over your creation, but it also will give you a chance to get something a bit lower in calories on the table. If you know what's in it, you will know how much of it you can have.

5. Choose wisely. It's easy, once people start passing dishes around, to just take a scoop of everything. Don't. Take a moment when you first sit down. Assess the situation—there will be things you really want, things you kind of want, things you'd like to taste and things you know are safe to eat. Grab from the last group first while you still have lots of room on your plate (lean turkey breast, non-sauced veggies, etc.). Then take a moderate amount of your super favorites, followed by a taste or two of unfamiliar items.

6. Treat yourself. Don't spend all your time obsessing about calories. If the thought of sitting through a meal without having at least a small serving of stuffing or a little slice of pie is unbearable, eat it! Remember: It's a celebration... so celebrate...a little!

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7. Leftover-mania. If you're hosting the get-together, stock up on disposable plastic containers that you don't care about getting back. Try to hand out most of the food you don't trust yourself around and don't want to be stuck eating for a week. If you're visiting, see if you can snag some of that turkey, but don't let yourself get loaded up with heavy stuff and desserts.

8. No "fat" pants. Choose something to wear that's comfortable and classy—don't go specifically looking through your closet for something with an elastic waistband. And never unbutton your pants at the table (only half-joking).

For more great ideas to help you maintain healthy eating habits during the holidays, download a copy of the American Heart Association's Holiday Healthy Eating Guide at: http://www.startwalkingnow.org/documents/HolidayHealthyEatingGuide9-19-2011.pdf.

Healthy holiday cookie recipe

Oatmeal-Cranberry Cookie Mix in a Jar

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour*
1 cup rolled oats
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup white sugar
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup white chocolate chips

* You can substitute some whole-wheat flour, if you wish.

Layer the ingredients in a clean, quart-sized jar. Cover the jar tightly with a lid and decorate as desired. Add a card with the following directions.

Additional ingredients

1/2 cup butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix butter, vanilla and egg together until smooth. Add cookie mix and mix well. Place by the spoonful onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for eight to 10 minutes until golden brown. For best flavor, use the cookie mix within nine months. Makes 28 cookies. Each cookie has 100 calories, 4.5 grams (g) of fat, 13 g of carbohydrate and 70 milligrams of sodium.

(Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., L.R.D., is a North Dakota State University Extension Service food and nutrition specialist and associate professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences).

Healthy holiday cookie recipe

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Avoid injury by selecting safe toys.

December is Safe Toys & Gifts Month

With the holidays in full swing, shopping for gifts tops many holiday to-do lists. Preventblindness.org provides tips in December on how to choose age appropriate and safe toys for children.

For more information, visit info@preventblindness.org or www.preventblindness.org.

Handwashing can keep you healthy

National Handwashing Awareness Week is the first full week of December each year. Handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent the transmission of disease according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Visit www.henrythehand.com to learn how you can promote handwashing awareness and how you and your coworkers can do your part to decrease the spread of germs during cold-and-flu season.

Hoping for a stress-free holiday season

No matter how much we may enjoy the holidays, stress and depression can become unwanted guests during all of the preparations and festivities. Baking, shopping, wrapping, caroling, parties and family gatherings can easily consume us and cause a blizzard of anxiety. The Mayo Clinic provides 10 practical tips to staying in control and enjoying the season:

1. Acknowledge that even though it is the "season of joy", it is OK to experience some negative or sad feelings and to take some time to express them.
2. Volunteer your time to help others, attend community events and surround yourself with people who can lift your spirits when you start to feel lonely or isolated.
3. Set realistic expectations for your holiday experience. Choose a few of the family traditions that mean the most to you, and be open to creating new ones as your family changes and grows.
4. Remember that others may be experiencing the holiday blues. Try to be understanding, offer your support and set differences aside for the sake of what is truly important to you during the holiday.
5. Make a realistic gift budget and stick to it. Make sure to include costs such as shipping, wrapping supplies, etc.
6. Make a plan. Coordinate with family and friends on menus and then make your lists. Pencil "to-do" tasks such as shopping and baking into your schedule and don't be afraid to delegate holiday duties.
7. Learn that it is OK to say no or to politely decline a few party invitations if your plate is getting a bit too full.

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8. Stick to your wellness plan; don't let the holidays be a free-for-all. Make sure you get plenty of sleep and exercise, keep healthy snacks available and enjoy your holiday favorites in moderation.

9. Make sure to take time to yourself to step back and enjoy what makes the holidays such a special time of year. A little quiet time here and there can go a long way to keep the stress at bay.

10. If you try everything and nothing seems to keep the stress and depression under control, seek professional help.

Family

We recognize that having a healthy family life is important to our overall quality of life and well-being. For that reason, and in answer to your valuable feedback, we will be adding a "Family Health" section to this monthly newsletter from now on.

Every moment we spend with our loved ones is priceless and December is a great time to start making our families a priority. No matter what your family dynamics may be, you can make health commitment this year to:

- Spend quality time together
- Eat family meals together
- Be active together, and
- Practice positive parenting

We look forward to providing you with quality information to help you and your family enjoy many healthy, memorable years together!

BCBSND's Member Education Program provides the information and tools to educate you and your employees.

Free resource

As you finalize plans for the upcoming wellness plan year, don't forget to include Heather Schuster and Milissa Van Eps, your area Member Education consultants. They are available at no cost to meet with your employees through an on-site visit or WebEx.

BCBSND's Member Education Program provides the information and tools to educate you and your employees on topics such as: Medication Education, Nutrition Basics, Taking Care of Yourself, Stress Management, Walking Works, Strength Training, Beat the Bug and Summer Safety.

Contact:

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Bismarck/Dickinson District
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Friendly reminders

- Everyone has until Dec. 31, 2011, to redeem their points on the MyHealthCenter online wellness tool. Points will not carry over into 2012.
- December is also a great time to remind everyone to log-in and do their annual update of information on MyHealthCenter.
- Your NDPERS Wellness Program Discount Application (SFN 58436) and Wellness Benefit Funding Program Application (SFN58361) are due to be submitted to PERS by Feb. 28 for the upcoming plan year. Now is a good time to pull your wellness committee together if you have one and finalize last details. All forms are available at http://www.nd.gov/ndpers/insurance-plans/employer-based-wellness.html. If you have questions on the application process, please call Rebecca Fricke at 701-328-3978 or email rfricke@nd.gov.

Enjoy all the flavors of the season without overdoing it

Save the dates

Wellness Coordinator conference calls

- **Dec. 7 WebEx** will be held at 2 p.m. CST.

  The average American gains between one and five pounds over the holiday season and usually does not lose that additional weight in the new year. Don't let this happen to you; break the cycle. During the December WebEx/Conference Call, Lori Howard, BCBSND Corporate Wellness Team Leader and licensed registered dietitian, will teach us how to enjoy all the flavors of the season without overdoing it. We will focus on practical ways to avoid weight gain over the holiday season so that you can begin 2012 without extra baggage. Participants will receive recipes and healthier alternatives to some traditional holiday dishes.

  To join the meeting: Go to http://www.webmeeting.att.com

  Meeting Number: 866 680 0148 **Code:** 704446

  For Audio: Dial 1-866-680-0148 **Code:** 704446

- **Jan. 11 Conference Call** will be held at 1 p.m. CST.

  Call-in Number: 1-866-680-0148 **Code:** 704446

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A partnership for worksite wellness

NDPERS and BCBSND are working together to support you and provide you and your coworkers the opportunity to have a healthier and more engaged worksite through Worksite Wellness tools. To help us do that, we would appreciate your feedback on all our wellness tools. We strive to serve your worksite better, and we welcome your suggestions.

Please take time to fill out any surveys we will submit to you to evaluate our programs.

Here is a list of contacts that will be useful to you as a Wellness Coordinator:

Tara Roberts
BCBSND/NDPERS
701-277-2852
tara.roberts@bcbsnd.com
Tara is your main resource contact. She can help you with general wellness program questions and assist you with enhancing your worksite wellness programs.

Rebecca Fricke
NDPERS
rfricke@nd.gov
Rebecca can help you with 1 percent premium questions, points on programs, updating coordinator information and the status or questions about the application process or forms.

Kathy Allen
NDPERS
kallen@nd.gov
Direct funding program questions to Kathy.

Onalee Sellheim
BCBSND
onalee.sellheim@bcbsnd.com
Direct questions about benefit plans or schedule Member Education programs through Onalee.

Jodi Crouse
BCBSND
jodi.crouse@bcbsnd.com
To collect aggregate data on your employer from the Health Reimbursement Arrangements, My Health Center and Health Club Credit, contact Jodi.

Milissa Van Eps
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701-795-5360
Contact Milissa to set up a Member Education program if you are located in eastern North Dakota.

Heather Schuster
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heather.schuster@bcbsnd.com
701-200-3905 (cell)
Contact Heather to set up a Member Education program if you are located in western North Dakota.

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