



Berkshire Health Group

Wellness Connection

Get Everyone Together— But Take the Focus Away from Food!

The holidays are a time to gather with the people you love. Holiday get-togethers don't have to revolve around food though. Try these fun ideas to keep yourself and the ones you love moving this holiday season!

Take a hike

Or simply walk around the neighborhood with your family (don't forget the dogs).

Start a new family tradition

While food is cooking, challenge the family to a game of touch football, wiffleball, basketball, etc.

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Keep the party going

Break out the Wii or charades to get everyone moving after dinner.

Find a new room for guests to gather

Rather than having your guests gather around appetizers and desserts, clear some space in your house for a dance floor.

Beat the cold

Too cold to go outside? Go to the local community center to play basketball, racquet ball, volleyball, etc.

Embrace the snow

Go sledding, ice skating, snow shoeing or have a good old fashioned snow ball fight.

Bring a friend

Rather than meeting a friend for food, meet at the gym! Grab some guest passes and talk on the treadmills or enjoy a fitness class together.

Try something different

Entertain guests with indoor attractions like bowling, indoor golf simulation, indoor rock climbing, etc.

Get Involved

Sign-up for your local holiday fun run or walk event or volunteer at the local toy drive or food pantry.

By Shannon Ashcroft, MEd, CPT



⇒ Attend your location's "Maintain Don't Gain" Holiday Challenge weigh-in (see page 2 for more info).

- ⇒ Bring a new friend to a BHG fitness class and receive a \$10 gift card.
- ⇒ Don't forget to stay active through the holidays! [Click here](#) to check out the November–December BHG Fitness Schedule.
- ⇒ Please your guests with the "Pumpkin Pie Pudding" recipe on page 3!



Indulge without Over-indulging

You've worked hard this year and you deserve to enjoy yourself over the holidays.

The good news is that you can stay healthy too! Try these simple tips to stay on track:

- Don't skip meals. You're more likely to overeat when you show up hungry.
- If it isn't your favorite holiday treat, say no!
- Meal prep and stock the freezer with healthy meals for busy days.
- Sign-up to bring a healthy dish to holiday parties.
- Go lighter on dressings, gravy and dinner rolls so you can still enjoy your favorites.
- Instead of a full glass of egg nog, mix in 1/2 to 3/4 parts of low-fat or skim milk
- Pass on the whipped cream or extra marshmallows to avoid the extra calories.
- Serve non-alcoholic cocktails to lower calories (but still watch out for sugar).
- Use herbs and spices to flavor dishes instead of salt or butter.



- Choose fresh fruits and veggies to use in your dishes rather than canned.
- Reach for the lighter pieces of meat without skin.
- Enjoy your favorites by keeping portions in check.
- Treat yourself by sampling 1 or 2 of your favorite sweets rather than having full servings.
- Use the buddy system and split dessert.
- Keep treats stored away to avoid temptation and mindless eating.

Most importantly, be realistic and forgive yourself. One indulgent meal doesn't have to turn into an entire day or season.

By Shannon Ashcroft, MEd, CPT

Maintain Don't Gain

The Challenge:

Maintain your weight within 2 pounds between Thanksgiving and New Years.

How to participate:

It will only take a couple minutes! Simply attend your location's initial weigh-in before Thanksgiving where you will receive a packet filled with healthy holiday tips and recipes. Come back to your location's final weigh-in after New Years to see how you did. Maintain your weight within 2 lbs. to earn yourself a \$10 gift card to Stop & Shop.

Watch for the weigh-in dates and times from your location's wellness champion!

Did you Know?

"People who had candy in or around their desks reported weighing 15.4 pounds more than those who didn't"

- Brian Wansink, PhD

Create a Healthy Workplace Culture

Weight gain is common over the holiday season and more than one third of our daily calories are consumed at work. Limiting the temptations of high sugar/high calorie treats at the workplace can significantly reduce weight gain and help support overall health. Help your co-workers out and leave the extra goodies at home.



A Gift For You— From you!

Give yourself a gift this holiday season by setting aside 15 minutes for yourself every day.

For many, the joy of the holidays also means increased stress.

We often find ourselves caring so much about the people we love that we forget to take care of ourselves. Here are some ideas to try during your holiday "me-time":

Just breathe

It's that easy! Wherever you are pause and take a deep breath. Even better if you can find a comfortable quiet place to breathe deeply for 5-15 minutes.

Move

Exercise is known to boost endorphins and increase blood flow, improving your mood and giving you a quick hit of energy. No time for the gym? Keep it simple and walk a lap around your work place or neighborhood or take 15 minutes to do the "Holiday Home Workout" below.

Meditate

If meditation is new to you, there are tons of YouTube videos and audio clips on the web that can help guide you. You may try deep breathing, visualization or progressive muscle relaxation techniques.

Practice gratitude

As you wake up in the morning or go to bed at night, write down or simply visualize three people or things that you are grateful for that day. As you think of each person or thing, focus intensely on what it is you love and send a silent note of gratitude.

Try something new

Have you been wanting to try yoga, acupuncture, massage or another form of self-care? Give a gift to yourself. You deserve it!

Do what you love

Most importantly, find time to do what you love whether its skiing, knitting, visiting a friend, taking a bubble bath or just finding a quiet place to read a book or listen to your favorite song.

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Holiday Home Workout

Perform each exercise below for 45 seconds without rest in between. There are beginner (B) and advanced (A) options for each. Once all four exercises are complete (3 minutes total), rest for 30-60 seconds and repeat the circuit 2-4 times depending on how much time you have.
Remember 10 minutes of exercise is far better than none!

1. Squats

B=Sit/Stand from a chair



A= Add weights or jump squats

2. Push-ups

B= Wall push-ups or modified on knees



A= Full plank on floor on toes

3. Cardio

B= March or side step



A= Jog, jump rope, stairs or ice skaters

4. Plank

B= Wall or modified on knees



A= Full plank

Pumpkin Pie Pudding

Yield

6 servings
(serving size:
6 ounces)



Health Note: With half the fat of other popular puddings, there's no need to worry about your diet while enjoying this dessert. And don't worry about satisfying your sweet tooth, because the sweetness of the pumpkin won't disappoint.

Ingredients

- 2 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
- 3/4 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pumpkin-pie spice

Preparation

Whisk milk, sugar, and cornstarch in a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Boil 3 minutes, whisking constantly. Beat eggs with a whisk in a large bowl. Gradually add half the hot milk mixture to the beaten eggs. Return milk-egg mixture to pan. Cook over medium heat 3 minutes, or until thick, whisking constantly. Remove from heat; stir in pumpkin, salt, and pumpkin-pie spice. Spoon evenly into 6 (6- ounce) custard cups. Let cool, and chill for about 30 minutes, or until pudding is set.

Nutritional Info

CALORIES 168; FAT 3g (sat 2g, mono 1g, poly 0.0g); PROTEIN 5g; CARBOHYDRATE 30g; FIBER 1g; CHOLESTEROL 77mg; IRON 1mg; SODIUM 214mg; CALCIUM 134mg

November-December Fitness!

Don't let the cold weather slow you down. Stick with your fitness program through the holidays with BHG!

NEW CLASSES!

Yoga

@ Craneville Elementary (Dalton)

Mondays: 4:15–5:15 PM

Oct 26–Dec 14

Total Body Blast

@ Lanesboro Elementary

Tuesdays: 3:20–4:20 PM

Nov 3–Dec 22

[Click here](#) for the complete schedule of classes running in November and December.

Wellness Challenges

"Maintain-Don't Gain" Holiday Challenge:

Simply weigh-in before Thanksgiving and again after the New Year. Maintain your weight and win a \$10 gift card! See page 2 for more info.

Coming in 2016...

"Take Flight" Stair Climbing Challenge

Don't let winter weather get you down. Stay warm indoors and track your daily stairs climbed! Details coming soon.

Online Health Risk Assessment Incentive

Complete your online HRA to receive a \$25 gift card. Details coming soon.

BHG Wellness Spotlight



Sharyn Alibozek, ACRSD Wellness Champion, always goes above and beyond for her group scheduling multiple fitness classes per session. She has even been generous enough to open her selection of classes to all BHG members. This Fall members could attend Cardio Fitness classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Yoga on Wednesdays. BHG thanks you, Sharyn!

"Sharyn has something for everybody. Some prefer yoga while some prefer a more intense workout. At Cheshire Elementary, you have the option to do all three if you want!" - Jackie Demastrie

Take Advantage of your Wellness Benefits!

- [Diabetes Care Program](#)
- [Colonoscopy Incentive Program](#)
- [BCBS Fitness Reimbursement](#)
- [BCBS Weight Loss Reimbursement](#)
- [FREE Fitness Classes](#)

Visit [Berkshirehg.com](#) for more info

For more information regarding any BHG Wellness Programs, please contact:

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Berkshire Health
Group & You...

