

Friday 19 December 2019

Media Release

SLEIGH YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING GOALS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Health promotion foundation VicHealth has brought together some top tips to help you sleigh your health and wellbeing goals through the Christmas and new year holiday season.

VicHealth CEO Dr Sandro Demaio said the festive period is the perfect time to reflect on how you want to start 2020.

“Although the holiday season can be a busy time, it’s important to try and slow down as much as possible. Taking the time to make small changes over the break can make a big difference when it comes to forming new habits for yourself in the new year,” Dr Demaio said.

“Small tweaks like piling your plate with veggies and colourful salads to have with Christmas lunch, breaking up your alcoholic drinks with fruity, fresh mocktails, and taking the dog for a walk or playing a game of backyard cricket after lunch will help keep you energised.

“Also, it’s important to look after your mental wellbeing over the holiday season and if you can check in on people who may be going through a hard time. If you’re struggling, reach out to your loved ones for support, or speak to your health professional – they’re there to help,” he said.

Start the new year feeling your best with these top tips

1. Add some colour to your plate

We all like to treat ourselves during the festive season. But you can still enjoy your favourite festive foods with a generous serving of veggies, salads and fruit. Try and make sure you have as much green, leafy veggies on your plate as possible (as well the glazed Christmas ham and roast turkey if that’s your thing). Aim to fill at least half your plate with veggies and salads. You’ll feel better for it!

2. Swap the cocktail for a mocktail

Imagine waking up on Boxing Day or New Year’s Day feeling fresh and revived, not crusty and hungover! Try starting the party with some fresh and fruity mocktails, and if you choose to drink an alcohol product stick to no more than four standard drinks in a session (a standard drink is roughly a pot of full-strength beer). Some fun mocktail recipes for you to try are available on the VicHealth website.

3. Avoid the spin

Christmas is a time when food and drink companies make it harder for us to be healthy, with a proliferation of unhealthy products and marketing techniques that persuade us that we need them for our holiday season to be complete. Unhealthy products like chocolates, soft drinks and alcohol are often heavily discounted at this time of year making it easy to buy and consume more than you need. Before buying that second case of wine or box of chocolates have a think about whether you really want it or if you’re just buying it because it’s on special.

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4. Get some decent sleep

Sleep is so important for our physical and mental health and most of us don't get enough of it. So these holidays make catching some more zzzzs a priority. Remember when you were a kid and you had a regular bedtime every night? Getting into a regular bedtime routine is a great step towards a better night's sleep. And while you're at it switch off your devices for an hour before bedtime for a more restful sleep.

5. Reach out

Not everyone is lucky enough to have support over the holiday period. If you know someone is doing it tough, reach out to them. Invite them over for Christmas. Check up on them to make sure they're okay. And if you're on your own, reach out to a local charity and help someone less fortunate this Christmas. When you're giving to someone else, it gets you out of your own head and also makes you feel good. Win, win!

6. Keep it moving

Keeping active is one of the best presents you can give yourself this Christmas. Go for a walk with a friend, use a bike to get around, take the stairs when you can, or try a new sport— just have a go! It doesn't matter how you look when you're doing it or if you're any good – all that matters is giving yourself the opportunity to get active while having a bit of fun these holidays.

7. Make your resolution to quit

If you only make one resolution this New Year make it this one –make 2020 the year you quit smoking. The good news is, as soon as you stop smoking, your body begins to repair itself. Over time, your risk of life-threatening health problems, including cancer, reduces dramatically. Whether you've never tried to quit before or have and didn't quite make it, there's amazing help available at www.quit.org.au

8. Digital detox!

Can you spend a few hours away from your phone? Why not set yourself a challenge and see if you can take a few hours or even (gasp) a few days off from your phone. Once that gnawing feeling of needing to live-stream your Christmas lunch passes you might find you enjoy it more without your phone. Why not invite a friend for a hike in nature or a walk along the beach and have a conversation IRL?

9. Pitch in

Share the load at Christmas. Christmas can be a stressful time, why not help out by bringing a plate of food to share and helping to clean up afterwards. It's a big ask to cater for lots of guests if you're hosting a Christmas or New Year's celebration so get involved and help lighten the load.

10. Book in some down time

'Self-care' has got to be the buzzword of 2019, but self-care doesn't always mean face masks and massages. It can also mean saying no to activities when you're feeling depleted, making time each day to do the things you love, cuddling a pet, getting an early night or just not over-scheduling yourself. Get on the self-care bandwagon this holiday season for a less hectic 2020.

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