



after day after day. The run up to Christmas means lots and lots of social events and, therefore, it is important to make the right food and drink choices.

■ **Dilute alcohol and drink more water**

Celebrating with a drink or two at Christmas is a must for many people but drinking too much could be putting your health at risk. A simple way to avoid overdrinking is to dilute your alcoholic drinks; so diluting white wine/vodka/whiskey, etc., with water or sparkling water is a good plan.

Another helpful tip is to have a glass of water for every glass of alcohol you drink; this should keep you hydrated (less risk of hangovers!) and stop you from drinking too much alcohol in a short period of time.

■ **Aim for small portions**

Be careful of all those canapés and buffets at the Christmas parties. Choose the non-creamy, non-pastry, non-fried, non-stodgy varieties. Stock up on the salads and vegetable crudité's instead, but be careful of the sauces and dips as these can be very rich and calorific.

■ **Make some healthier food changes**

Some very simple changes can make Christmas food far healthier:

- ✓ Remove the skin from the turkey.
- ✓ Eat baked potatoes instead of roast potatoes.
- ✓ Use yogurt instead of cream for the Christmas pudding.
- ✓ Use olive oil instead of butter on your veggies.
- ✓ Swap pâté (high in saturated fat) for hummus. Opt for goat's cheese (generally lower in fat) on your cheese plate over brie, cheddar or blue cheese.
- ✓ Swap crisps for unroasted, unsalted varieties of nuts.

■ **Slow down and enjoy every bite**

Eat slowly: Remember, there can be a 15-20-minute delay before the stomach tells the brain that it is full. If you eat too quickly, you will end up being uncomfortably full, which means your stomach is being stretched.

■ **Respect your appetite**

Don't starve yourself to compensate for over-eating. Keep to your normal eating pattern; skipping meals and starving the

body may confuse your appetite rhythm and may result in a vicious cycle of crash diets and overeating binges in the long run.

■ **Keep active**

Exercise is so important – even if you are strapped for time, make some active changes. For example, walk the stairs instead of taking the lift or elevator/park the car further away or get off the bus a few stops earlier and walk the rest of the way/do 10 minutes of simple exercises first thing in the morning (sit ups/press ups/squats/star jumps, etc.). The 7-minute app is perfect. Download it on your smartphone or iPad. Exercise is achievable, so no excuses.

■ **Use your leftovers wisely**

Perhaps a zingy Thai turkey salad or a delicious rye bread sandwich made with avocado and leftover turkey breast or a pea and Brussel sprout soup?

■ **Be mindful**

Mindfulness is a psychotherapeutic approach for weight, stress, pain and behavioural management. The idea is to focus your attention on the present moment. Being mindful when you eat is about devoting your senses to the experience of eating, which should help improve digestive functions as well as prevent overeating episodes.

■ **Sharing is caring**

If your guests bring you sweet treats as gifts, share your gifts so that no tempting treats remain in the fridge to tempt you the next day. These treats are a sure way to test your willpower!

Heather's Christmas Recipe



CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

NUTRITIONAL GOODNESS

A combination of naturally sweet and fibre packed dates with protein-rich walnuts and sunflower seeds to keep energy levels up, whilst maintaining balanced blood sugar levels. They make a great gift to give to your loved ones for Christmas.

MAKE YOUR OWN:

- 1/2 cup Sunflower Seeds
- 1/2 cup Walnuts
- 1 cup Dates (pitted)
- 1/2 tsp Cinnamon
- 4 tbsp Raw Cacao Powder (or Cocoa Powder)
- 1 tsp Coconut Oil
- 1 pinch Himalayan Salt
- 2 tbsp Water
- Coating: Cacao powder/Desiccated Coconut/Chopped Walnuts/Chopped Sunflower Seeds.

METHOD

- Blitz up all the ingredients except the water in a food processor.
- When combined, add the water and blitz for a minute.
- Using the palms of your hands, roll the mixture into small balls.
- Gently roll the balls in your chosen coating.
- Place in the fridge for at least half an hour to set.

‘It is THE SEASON!
Have a happy and healthy Christmas

OVERINDULGING SEEMS TO BE part and parcel of Christmas. Christmas seems to be everyone's excuse for over eating, over drinking and generally just 'letting go'. But why should this be the case? Is it really worth the misery of having to lose weight and get back on track in January? Surely this just becomes a vicious cycle every time Christmas comes a ringing? So why not continue on your health path all year round by installing conscious eating and maintaining healthy lifestyle choices.

TIPS TO MAKE THIS CHRISTMAS A HEALTHY ONE

■ **Don't overindulge**

One of the main reasons for weight gain at Christmas isn't actually down to Christmas dinner, it's about higher calorie intake day

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