

South Western Sydney Local Health District

Media Release



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Stay healthy this Christmas

This Christmas and New Year don't let the festive treats and holiday atmosphere undo your healthy eating and exercise goals.

South Western Sydney Local Health District's Health Promotion Service Director, Mandy Williams said people didn't need to feel like the Grinch when it comes to festive cheer, but they should avoid overindulging.

"Try choosing healthier nibbles like wholegrain crackers with hummus, unsalted nuts, popcorn, strawberries, blueberries or sultanas instead of chips and chocolate," she said.

"Provide plenty of vegetables and salads as part of your festive meals and seasonal summer fruits can make beautiful desserts.

"If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages try choosing options that are lighter in alcohol and go for water over sugary fizzy drinks."

Ms Williams said it was also important to stay active during the holidays to reduce your chances of gaining weight and to help relieve stress and re-energise.

"Exercise releases a happy chemical into your brain called dopamine and plays a crucial role giving us feelings of pleasure and happiness," she said.

"Given that time is one of the biggest barriers to exercise, a break from the usual work routine can provide the ideal opportunity to begin or maintain physical activity."

If an influx of relatives and visitors makes it difficult to do your usual workout, Ms Williams said you can try getting them all involved.

"Backyard cricket is an Australian favourite and all you really need to get a game going is a cricket bat, some balls and a nearby bin as stumps," she said.

"Who doesn't like a game of Frisbee? All you need is a flying plastic disc, a pair of legs, your relatives, friends and a big backyard or local park to play in."

It is also important to make sure you avoid food poisoning by following a few simple steps.

- Do not reheat meat and poultry more than once, and try and eat any leftovers within 48 hours of being cooked.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw and cooked foods
- Don't leave perishable foods out of the refrigerator for more than two hours
- Always wash your hands before preparing food or after handling raw food

- Any leftover meat and poultry should be covered and placed in the fridge as soon as possible. Do not leave it on the bench to cool first.
- Store raw and cooked food separately in your refrigerator - raw food at the bottom so that it doesn't drip on to other foods.
- Make sure that food is cooked right through before serving.
- Keep pets and animals out of the kitchen, food preparation areas and any dining areas.
- Thoroughly wash all dirt off any raw vegetables and fruits before preparing and eating them.
- Dry dishes with a different cloth to that used for wiping hands or bench tops and wash dish cloths regularly.