



## FESTIVE SPREAD— STRIKING A GOOD BALANCE

**‘Tis the season for great food and drinks but don’t get too stuffed! Overindulging in those irresistible, sumptuous buffet spreads may result in increased blood sugar levels and weight gain. For Wei Chek, dietitian, National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, guides you on your festive feasting.**

The most important thing to bear in mind this festive season is to balance one’s daily energy input and energy output. So if you plan to eat more during the new year celebrations, you will need to work out more to burn away the extra calories consumed.

Here are some handy suggestions to help you avoid bingeing on your favourite festive foods:

### Before Meal

Have a portion of healthy snack, e.g. fruits, sandwich or a slice of bread, before you leave home as this will help prevent you from overeating if the meal is served late.

Make a round along the buffet table and observe the menu displayed before you decide the type and amount of food to take.

Drink plenty of plain water instead of sugary soft drinks or alcoholic drinks before you start eating.

### During Meal

Limit all-you-can-eat food items to once only; try not to go for seconds.

Place each food item in moderation on your plate; you could also use a smaller plate to prevent taking too much food.

Choose foods which are lower in fat content such as grilled, broiled or stewed items and limit the deep-fried items.

Remove poultry skin or trim off the fatty layer of meat and choose the leaner parts, such as breast meat.

Take more vegetables, salads, beans or legumes instead of meat to increase fibre-intake to make you feel full.

Reduce the use of dressings on salads or spread on breads.

Reduce the amount of sauces or gravies added onto your selected food items.

Ask for plain water or sugar-free beverages throughout the occasion to replace sugary drinks.

Chew your food slowly and do not attack your food.

Drink plenty of plain water during meal for a full feeling to avoid overeating.

Put utensils down between each bites during your meal.

Stop eating once you feel full and do not force yourself to finish all the leftovers on the plate.

Spend time with your family or friends during the occasion instead of focusing on the food.

### After meal

Dispose your leftover food immediately when you feel full to avoid overeating.

During parties, stay away from the dining table and participate in the other activities.

### Don’t Forget Medication

Put your medicines into pill boxes and bring them along with you to all outings.

### Balance with Exercise

Put on those sports shoes and go for a walk! Brisk walking for 30 minutes can help you burn about 100kcal!

Here are some examples of common food situations you may encounter during this festive season:

**Situation 1:** You are at a relative’s party and there is a buffet-style menu.

**Solution:** Have a small portion of each food item. Avoid choosing oily food intake; add more vegetables, and a serving of fruit instead of sugary desserts or drinks.

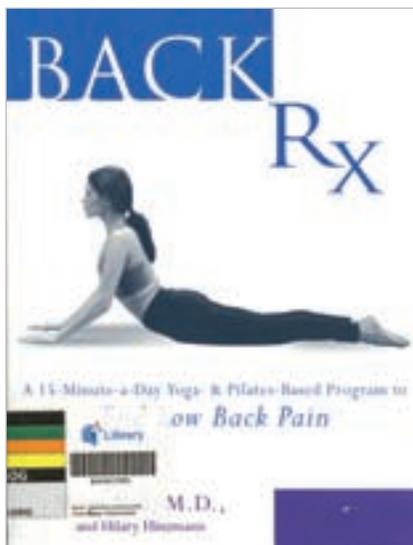
**Situation 2:** You are offered a can of soft drink and festive cookies.

**Solution:** Request a can of diet soft drink instead; alternatively, share half the can of soft drink with a family member and have one or two cookies. This will reduce your calorie intake.

**REMEMBER -** As with just about anything in life, Moderation is the key.

**Back Rx: a fifteen-minute-a-day Yoga-and Pilates-based program to end low back pain**

Vijay Vad and Hilary Hinzmann.  
New York : Gotham Books, c2004.  
Call No.: 617.56406 VAD - [HEA]



Do you know that by moving forward when you sneeze or cough may trigger and worsen a back injury? Very often, we ignore simple actions that can do our backs harm such as by bending down to tie our shoelaces or bending down to pick up a heavy bag. These actions harm our backs to the same degree. It is important that we

protect our backs by adopting proper postures while we are lifting things, pushing and pulling things or even when involved in simple daily activities like sitting.

Modern lifestyle vastly increases our chances of hurting our backs. In the past, human beings sat cross-legged flat on the floor with their backs straight. Nowadays, people slouch at their desks much of the time and the poor sitting postures put stress on our lower backs and lead to strained back muscles. Comparatively, we sit a lot more than people in the past who walked from one place to another. We risk suffocating our spinal discs by sitting too often and too long.

The back is an important part of the human body. It supports our posture and grants us a mobility without which life would be unthinkable. Yet many of us are guilty of torturing our backs. Even highly conditioned athletes are susceptible to low back pain. Thus, it is essential to know the functionality of our backs and how fragile our backs actually are.

Lower back injury can cause inconvenience, pain and, not to mention, restrict our movements. Lower back pain can make us cringe in pain at the slightest move, which includes pain in any part of our backs or even legs resulting from lower back injury.

A complete Back Rx series of exercises is provided in this book to help you get moving again without pain! Based on the ever-popular Pilate and with comprehensive pictures to depict the various exercises involved, this book will take you step-by-step towards a pain-free back!

**Insomnia: how to sleep easy**

Dr Leon Lack, Dr Helen Wright, Dr Helen Bearpark  
Singapore :ACP Asia, c2004.  
Call No.: 616.8498 LAC - [HEA]

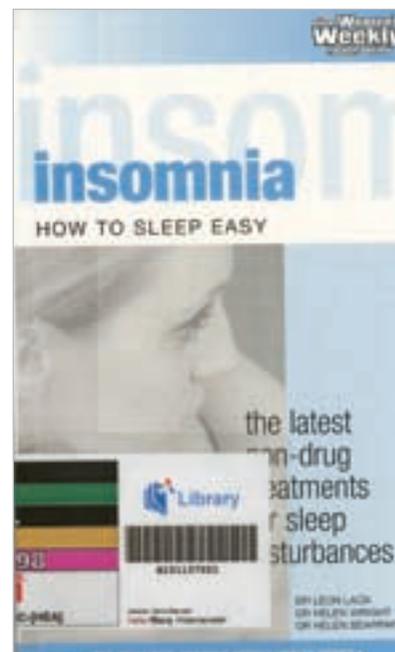
Insomnia has become increasingly rampant in today's society with all its potential sleep disrupters, such as the heavy demands on our time, travel jet lag or even shift work. Thus, it is interesting to know that some people practise bedtime rituals just to prepare their bodies for that all essential slumber.

Cleaning of teeth and changing into their pajamas are just some of the rituals! It is important to develop good sleep practices such as having a warm bath or not consuming caffeine drinks in order to attune your body to a sleeping mode every night.

According to the authors, insomnia is progressive. You may be suffering from transient insomnia if your insomnia lasts for a week at most. If this condition drags on for a few weeks, you have short-term insomnia.

Chronic insomnia occurs only when you have had insomnia for at least three months. Insomnia at various stages requires different treatments. Hence, you have to nip it in the bud before it gets out of hand.

You can overcome insomnia only if you understand it and know the appropriate actions to take. This book also contains a myriad of interesting tidbits about sleep to help you understand good sleep patterns. A useful list of medical associations is also included. You will soon be on your way to dreamland!



Urinary tract infections are caused by a variety of bacteria, but 85 percent of UTIs are started by Escherichia coli or E. coli.

By Heng Huey Bin, National Library Board

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