

The Wellness Exchange



For more information call 1-800-765-3277 or visit bhsonline.com



Stress-Free Gift Giving

Many of us feel the strain of financial stress around the holiday season due to holiday gift buying. And we can continue to feel stressed for months after the holiday season is over as those big credit card bills start showing up in our mailbox. During the current economic situation it may be a good time to re-think your approach to holiday gift giving. Here are some creative and money saving tips that may help you approach your holiday gift buying in a new way that will work for your loved ones... and for your budget.

BOOKS FOR EVERYONE

Buying a loved one just the right book is a great way to show someone that you know them well and understand their interests and tastes. Whether it's a cook book, travel book, current fiction, or a child's picture book, there is a book for absolutely everyone on your list. Books are truly the gift that keeps on giving because they provide hours of involvement and spark many great conversations. Books are the most easily exchanged gifts possible (just remember that gift slip).

Amazon.com and other similar sites have a wide range of books for every person on your list and will ship the books directly to your recipient with a holiday gift card enclosed. Many of the big chain bookstores like **Borders** and **Barnes & Noble** go all out for the holiday season with a wide range of special coffee-table books, art books and, of course, calendars. The big bookstores even have in-store, do-it-yourself gift wrapping stations for free.



SET A DOLLAR LIMIT

This requires some discipline, but it makes a lot of sense. The amount you spend on a gift is not a reflection of how much you love or care about the recipient. A pre-determined dollar amount, say \$20, can help make you be more thoughtful and creative as you try to stay within your budget and take advantage of pre-holiday specials and sales.

MAKE A DONATION

Somebody on your holiday list is passionate about something like the environment or breast cancer prevention. A charitable donation made in their name is a terrific gift. Charitable and religious organizations are happy to send attractive certificates to recognize such contributions and it's definitely a gift that is in keeping with the spirit and meaning of the season. Try this unique group:

www.heifer.org.

HOMEMADE GIFTS

Tap into your creative side and make something unique for your friends and family members this year. A custom made music CD, a photo album, or handmade place mats will really stand out from the usual shopping mall selections. And if you're a good cook the possibilities are endless, from cookies and brownies to gourmet jams and jellies and much more.

JUST FOR KIDS



Why not create a new family tradition by purchasing gifts only for those family members under the age of 18 or 21? Young people are easier to buy for and they seem to appreciate their holiday gifts much more than adults.

Business Health Services is a free and confidential program provided by your employer for you and your family members. BHS can help resolve personal and professional problems. For additional information call BHS today.



Sensible Holiday Eating

The Holiday Season

Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, is a great time for friends and family and parties. It's also a time for lots of eating and drinking. But the holidays are not enjoyable at all if you over-indulge, gain weight or overdo it with alcoholic beverages. Here are some easy strategies to help keep you from going overboard during the holiday season.

Scope out the Scene: Give that party buffet a good once-over before digging in. Target just a few things that you really, really like. Don't take items that you can eat anytime (like cheese cubes).

Make a Bargain: You've been good all week, so you tell yourself that it's okay to splurge at the holiday party. This is a type of bartering. If you really stay disciplined and eat healthy during the week, then it's okay to give yourself a little leeway on the weekends.

Watch Your Portions: A big amount of food doesn't taste any better than a reasonable amount of that same food. Eating too much and then not feeling good about it later defeats the whole purpose. Don't spoil things for yourself. Try and eat a small amount that tastes good and then walk away.

Stay Active: Maintaining your physical activity routine can be very important during the holiday season. If you don't have a regular routine, now would be a good time to make sure that you are exercising or walking at least 3 times a week.



LOW-FAT BEAN DIP

From: Taste of Home

- 3 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 15 oz. can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 3 Tablespoons chopped green onions
- 1-2 teaspoons seeded, minced jalapeno pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon sugar

Combine all the ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve with raw veggies or tortilla chips.

Non-Alcoholic Holiday Punch from COOKS.COM

- 4 clean ½ gallon paper milk cartons (cut off the top)
- 5 (30z.) packages of strawberry or cherry gelatin
- 5 cups sugar
- 1 quart very hot water
- 4 quarts of cold water
- 46 oz. pineapple juice
- 1 small can frozen lemonade, thawed
- 1 large can crushed pineapple
- Ginger-Ale or 7-Up

Dissolve the gelatin and sugar in the hot water. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into the two milk cartons and freeze. When ready to serve your punch, thaw until you can easily remove the cartons and for each carton add two large bottles of Ginger-Ale or 7-Up.



HOLIDAY EATING DON'TS:

Don't start a brand new diet during the holidays. It's just too hard!

Don't eat on an empty stomach! Have some soup or a piece of fruit before you go out to take the edge off your appetite.

Don't skip meals because you are going to a holiday party that evening.

Don't stand next to the buffet table. Serve yourself a reasonable amount and mingle.

**Business Health Services
is available
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
1-800-765-3277**