



PARTY-SEASON

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Want to get through the silly season in good shape? Get smart with these expert-approved tips

The average person consumes between 12,600 and 25,200 kilojoules (kJ) on Christmas day alone.* That's between 50 per cent and 200 per cent more than we actually need⁵ and mainly comes from second helpings, snacks and alcohol. So, if you're not doing extra exercise to compensate, you can guess where that all goes.

In fact, research⁷ shows 51 per cent of the annual average weight gain comes from the four weeks leading up to Christmas and stays put until the new year, when it increases again. Thankfully, you can beat the cycle with a little know-how. Here's our get-savvy guide.

ALCOHOL

Make sure you eat something before your first drink. "Drinking on an empty stomach increases your appetite because alcohol's high carbohydrate content causes blood sugar levels to fluctuate," explains naturopath, nutritionist and herbalist Carolyn Ledowsky (www.northbridgenaturalhealth.com.au).

The lowest-kilojoule drinks are wine spritzers (300kJ); clear spirits (e.g. vodka or gin) with soda water and fresh lemon or lime (320kJ); white wine (470kJ); a bloody mary (500kJ); and a mojito (700kJ). Kilojoule-saving tips include having a glass of water between each alcoholic drink, asking for extra ice or a tall glass so you get more

water, and not exceeding two alcoholic drinks per occasion.

PARTY FOOD

Bite-sized doesn't always mean kilojoule-petite. One vol-au-vent contains as many kilojoules as a Caramello Koala (412kJ). Just seven of these nibblies (an average of one every eight minutes in an hour) can add up to a third of the day's recommended kilojoule intake. Ideally, have two or three of the most decadent canapés, then just say no.

The worst offenders are cream- and pastry-based or fried snacks, while healthier choices include rice paper rolls, mini sandwiches, smoked salmon on crackers/bread, and stuffed olives (five are worth just 215kJ).

LONG LUNCHES

Pasta may beckon, but did you know a plate of fettuccine carbonara is packed with up to 5850 kilojoules? That's the equivalent of a Big Mac, large fries, a Coke, plus a doughnut!

Instead of carbohydrate- and fat-packed cuisines, pick lean protein and vegetable-based meals, such as Thai beef salads, and chicken breast (skin removed) or grilled fish with salad, says nutritionist Kristen Beck (www.beckhealth.com.au). Protein makes you feel fuller than carbohydrates, and nourishes hair, skin and nails. Limit creamy sauces (e.g. tartare – 515kJ for 20g), sides of hot chips (medium serve – 1540kJ), and fat-based gravy (410kJ per serving). ▶

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MATT IRVIN/TRUNKARCHIVE.COM/SNAPPER MEDIA; GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM. *ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION, BASED ON AN 8400-KCAL-DAY DIET. †NUTRITION REVIEWS, VOL. 38, NO. 12, 378-379 (2000). ‡UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO.



TIP: Research shows that thanks to flavones, having a glass of **ORANGE JUICE** with fatty meals helps reduce blood vessel damage (which contributes to heart attacks and strokes).[‡]

TIP: To convert kilojoules to calories, divide by 4.2. Or, download a calorie converter app.

TOP 5

MEAL TIPS

Have your cake and eat it, too

1 If you're going to eat something naughtily sweet, have it with a small handful of nuts to help balance blood sugar levels and prevent a sugar binge, advises Lola Berry, nutritionist and author of *The 20/20 Diet* (Pan Macmillan, \$22.99). Visit www.lolaberry.com.

2 "Slice your food to consume 20 per cent less kilojoules. People rate sliced servings as 27 per cent larger than equal amounts of whole vegetables, and so pile less onto their plates," says nutritionist Kristen Beck. Do it with everything.

3 Let your brain catch up with your stomach – it takes 20 minutes for the body to tell the brain it's already full. Do this by putting utensils down between mouthfuls and chewing until food is near (if not) liquefied. Savour every single bite for full satisfaction.

4 Eat a light meal or healthy snack, such as fruit, an hour or two before an event to take the edge off your hunger, advises Beck.

5 Use a smaller plate to trick your mind that you're eating more than you really are.



CHRISTMAS DAY

Choose lean meat, such as turkey or chicken, and ditch visible fat. Removing the skin alone saves 210kJ per serve. White meat is generally leaner than dark, so choose chicken or turkey breast over drumsticks and wings. Fill half your plate with vegetables or salad; avoid crackling; take the tops off mince pies to save 335kJ; and watch moreish treats – just one Lindt Lindor ball contains 330kJ. **If you're the host:** Roast meat on a rack so the fat can drip away; cook stuffing and vegies separately to meat so they don't soak up animal fat; swap cream for evaporated skim milk when making creamy sauces; and ditch puddings and cakes for fruit platters, ricotta cheesecake drizzled with fruit puree, or two mini pavlovas with berries and yoghurt (880kJ).

Cook with coconut oil as it contains medium-chain fatty acids, which research* shows are three times more effective at raising post-meal metabolism – with this boost lasting up to 24 hours**. Another study† shows it cuts the amount of body fat you'd usually store, meaning you can lose 5.4 to 16.2 kilograms a year – even when your kilojoule consumption remains the same – if consumed regularly.

And if you eat too much? Don't "stuff it all" and go overboard. Don't let one day of overindulgence turn into weeks, months or a habit. Balance it with exercise – just 30 minutes of brisk walking burns at least 460kJ. Also, drink a cup of ginger or chamomile tea. "It will help you digest the food quicker and reduces bloating and gas," says Beck.

SLEEP

Did you know that a lack of sleep sabotages fat loss? Research from the University of Chicago in 2010 shows having only 5.5 versus 8.5 hours sleep each night for two weeks reduces fat loss by 55 per cent and makes you more peckish due to increased levels of the hunger-regulating hormone ghrelin. Also, get to bed early, as the best-quality sleep occurs between 10pm and 6am. Every half-hour of sleep before midnight equates to the quality of two hours of sleep past it. ■

SWAP & SAVE



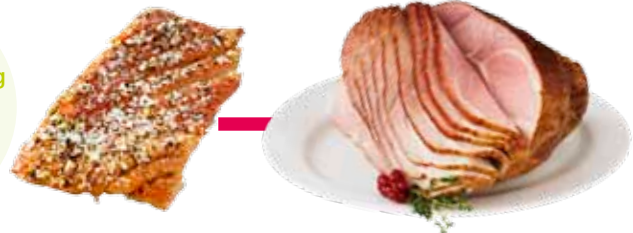
SWAP THESE
3 shortbread
biscuits
FOR THIS
Gingerbread
man cookie
**SAVE
700kJ**

SWAP THIS
Pina colada
FOR THIS
Mojito
**SAVE
500kJ**



SWAP THIS
Large slice of
Christmas pudding with
½ cup low-fat custard
FOR THESE
2 mini pavlovas with
berries and yoghurt
**SAVE
630kJ**

SWAP THIS
30g pork crackling
FOR THIS
30g ham
**SAVE
500kJ**



POST-PARTY SOS

PROBLEM: YOU'VE GOT THE HANGOVER FROM HELL

SOLUTION: You need to rehydrate. Drink at least two litres of water daily. If you prefer flavour, 350ml of coconut water has the same short-term hydrating powers as one litre of water. As for hangover cures? "Vegetable juices and herbal teas are the way to go – not the greasy hamburger," points out Ledowsky. "Carrot, celery, beetroot and ginger with a spinach leaf are terrific to help clear out those toxins (it takes your liver an hour to eliminate just one unit of alcohol). Dandelion tea is the best liver-cleansing tea and tastes great. Just add lemon," she adds.

PROBLEM: YOU CAN'T SEEM TO SHIFT THOSE EXTRA KILOGRAMS

SOLUTION: Delete decadent meals with exercise. The consensus is you need to burn 14,700kJ to lose half a kilogram of weight; so if you trim 1050kJ by exercising and another 1050kJ through kilojoule cuts daily, you will, in theory, lose half a kilogram each week.

KILOJOULE CALCULATOR†

15 MINS STAIR CLIMBING	burns 325kJ
8 MINS SKIPPING	330kJ
30 MINS POWER WALKING	460kJ
30 MINS DANCING	460kJ
23 MINS JOGGING/RUNNING AT 12KM/H (LEVEL 12 ON THE TREADMILL)	840kJ