

Surviving the Holidays – Chemically Speaking

Holiday times for many is an extremely happy, joyful time of year where family and friends come together and celebrate. Along with the festivities come the infamous foods, drinks and treats of the season. It is no wonder that I see more episodes of fatigue, headaches, stomachaches and flare-ups of irritable bowel, muscle and joint pain and irritability this time of year. Knowing your body and what you do well with just might make the holidays a much happier season for you this year.

If you're the lucky type and never have any of the above health issues than you are truly blessed with superior genes. You are a wonderful detoxifier and your body can process whatever you throw at it. These people have what I call the "European Stock Genes". Unfortunately we can't all be so lucky (including myself) and have to be somewhat mindful of what we throw into our bodies or be prepared to pay the price. Sometimes the price is quite hefty and mapping out a strategy in advance, somewhat of a survival guide might save you some punishment.

If you have periodic episodes of not feeling well or any symptoms that create discomfort you should be aware that any chemical exposure to highly processed substances potentially can trigger an episode. Our exposure to overly processed foods is high this time of year and if you overload the system you suffer.

Let's start off with beverages and alcohol. Many of the sweet drinks this time of year are sweetened with high fructose corn syrup. For more people than not this stuff is almost a guarantee to put you into a hypoglycemic state within a few hours of ingestion. That means fatigue, headaches, irritability and an increase in hunger. Stick with filtered or bottled water or juices that do not add high fructose corn syrup (there are many that are without it). Avoid the Pina Coladas, Frozen Daiquiris, and fancy drinks due to the chemical processing of the mixes used along with the ridiculous high amount of the high fructose corn syrup. If you must drink stick with alcohol mixed with juice or tonic water. The simpler the better.

Generally speaking, the meats and vegetables will not create a problem for most, however processed meats such as sausages and cold cuts do contain high amounts of nitrates and nitrites. These substances can trigger

headaches, stomachaches, and severe fatigue for those that are susceptible. They are fairly easy to avoid and it would be best to stick with fresh meats which are not deep fried or breaded. Breaded meats such as chicken cutlets usually contain partially hydrogenated oils (in the bread crumbs) which generates free radical release in the body. Free radicals damage the immune system and are suspect as triggers to immune system problems and cancer. They also will have a tendency to trigger fatigue and are very unhealthy for the heart.

The desserts will be the most difficult to resist since they're usually placed right in front of you. The best thing to do is to eat a lot of fresh fruit, if available. Even though it may not seem as appealing as the baked goods, by the time you're done with the fruit your craving for the processed sweets will be dramatically reduced. It's hard to know which sweets will do the most damage to you. Baked goods use baking powder and most commercial brands of baking powder contain aluminum. Between the quality of the water that the flour was mixed with, the hydrogenated oils and the type of oils used (cottonseed being the most offensive), artificial colors and flavorings, preservatives and additives, the desserts will pose the biggest potential for an adverse reaction. Eater beware!

There are several ways to prepare yourself if you know you are the type that can't resist temptation. If you're not an extremely sensitive person then you could probably protect yourself with a B complex vitamin which helps tremendously with carbohydrate metabolism and energy utilization. Milk thistle herb helps with liver detoxification in the event your liver does not tolerate the various substances and toxins it encounters in the food. Glutathione or N-acetylcysteine (the latter being the less expensive and more efficient way to increase glutathione levels) which converts to glutathione will also encourage improved liver detoxification and is needed for carbohydrate metabolism. In the event that you do have a reaction to something you ate and you feel wiped out get rid of the processed foods in your house. Don't continue to eat the cookies, cake or pie that put you in this state. Eat plenty of high water fruits the next day such as watermelon and grapefruit which will help the reaction pass quicker.

If you're an extremely sensitive individual then you may be sensitive to the very vitamins, minerals and herbs which are suppose to help you. You must exert discipline and eat some safe food at home before going to dinners or

outings. If you're not so hungry when you get there you will be less likely to eat the wrong foods. More appropriate remedies for these people are liquid homeopathic formulas that encourage detoxification and drainage but it is on such an individual basis that it would be impossible to recommend which one would be the best choice. For those that are extremely sensitive I do recommend that you read Ellen Cutler's new book called "The Food Allergy Cure". I am a practitioner of this technique and can state that it can dramatically alter a person's health.

Eat sensibly, know your body and have a wonderful and healthy holiday!

Dr. Silverman is a chiropractor and state certified nutritionist who has been in practice for 22 years. He has taught college level courses in holistic health and nutrition and has appeared on many TV and radio shows including the Gary Null show and News 12. He has lectured and consulted for several homeopathic and nutritional companies and has two offices, one in Hauppauge (631)724-6780 and one in Roslyn (516)484-0776.