

HELLO

and welcome to the December issue of our Wellness Newsletter.

DECEMBER 2021

HEALTHIER MIND

HEALTHIER FOOD

HEALTHIER BODY

HEALTHIER WORLD



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**It's December so we can officially start getting excited about Christmas!**

Over the festive period it can be a challenge not to overindulge, although we definitely agree that mince pies and mulled wine should still be consumed – in moderation of course! So, this month our ESS Nutrition and Wellbeing Team are setting you a challenge to enjoy '12 Days of Wellness' in the lead up to the big day.

You don't have to commit to all of them but why not challenge yourself to do as many as you can over the next few weeks to contribute to a Healthier Mind, Food, Body and World? You might even find some habits which you enjoy so much you'll want to continue them into 2022!

We have lots of guest features from our ESS colleagues sharing their top tips for overall wellbeing, from ways to boost your step count, checking in on your colleagues and cutting down on festive food waste.

**Jay Averill**, ESS Executive Chef, has provided a tasty festive leftovers recipe and **Ryan Hopper**, ESS Executive Chef, talks us through a vegetarian alternative to pigs in blankets! Read on for more..

This December, we also are recognising **Christmas Jumper Day** and **International Volunteer Day**.

We hope you enjoy the festive period and wish you a happy (and healthy!) Christmas and New Year!

#### In this issue:

- 12 Days of Wellness
- International Volunteer Day  
5<sup>th</sup> December
- Christmas Jumper Day  
10<sup>th</sup> December

# THE 12 DAYS OF WELLNESS

We are challenging you this month to make the lead up to Christmas healthy and happy, full of wellness tasks to help you have a healthier Mind, Food, Body and World.



## DAY 1: UP YOUR STEP COUNT

Most of us know the benefits of sitting less and moving more, so let's get active over this festive period!

Aim to increase your step count to 10,000 each day. If you don't have a wearable activity tracker, you could pop one on your Christmas wish list – alternatively, there are lots of apps you can download to your smart phone which will help track your steps.



**Harjeet Moore**, ESS Head of People, shares her top tips on how to boost your step count – even when the days are shorter:

### Build in a daily walk

Popping out for a lunchtime stroll or quick loop around the block before or after work can really help to bump up your step count. You could even break this up into short 10-minute walks throughout the day.

### Take the stairs

An oldie but a goodie... taking the lift or escalator can seem appealing when confronted with a mountain of steps, however opting for the stairs can help improve your step count. If you've got time or you're feeling really energetic, why not get to the top, turn around and go back down?

### Go the extra mile

Add some extra steps where you can walk a bit further. Can you park in a parking spot further away from the office or supermarket door? Can you go to the printer on a different floor of your office or make a cup of tea in a kitchen further away?

### Walk and talk

Why not plug in your headphones and go for a stroll while you're on your work calls?

### Make it social

Grab a friend and also challenge them to up their step count too. Encourage a work colleague to pop out at lunchtime or meet for a friend coffee at the weekend and plan a walk with your coffee?

## DAY 2:

# TRY MINDFULNESS OR MEDITATION

We know that the festive period can be a bit of a headache for some but taking time out (even if it's just five minutes!) can really help.



Back in May, **Evan Judge**, Senior HSE Manager, held a live 10-minute mindfulness session as part of Mental Health Awareness Week. If you need a quick time-out, check it out [HERE](#). Headspace, Mind and YouTube are also full of great mindful resources.

This year we've also been speaking more about mental health. Catch up on some of our live panel discussions and conversations with our ESS colleagues who are trained in Mental Health First Aid [HERE](#).



## DAY 3:

# VEG OUT\*

\* ...and when we say 'veg out', we don't mean chill on the sofa all day!

Can you pack in your veg and make sure you get your 5 A Day over the festive period?

Why not try your seasonal festive favourites – the ideas below may help:

- Add a small handful of **dried cranberries** to your porridge in the morning, or stew up some apples with lots of cinnamon and winter spices for your breakfast.
- **Beetroot brownies** are a delicious way to use up seasonal beets! They can make a delicious dessert or treat with your morning coffee.
- **Roasted root vegetable soup** is a warming lunch and can be a great way to sneak in more veg! You could find a recipe and make it your own depending on what you have left in the fridge.
- A definite crowd divider, but **Brussels sprouts** are actually much more versatile than the soggy, overcooked ones you might have on Christmas Day! Roasted, raw or in a slow – get creative... they might just become your favourite festive veg.

Don't forget that fresh, frozen and canned all count towards your 5 a Day. Generally, a portion of fruit or veg is:

- **About 80g** – this is 1 medium piece of fruit (e.g. apple, banana, pear), 3 tablespoons of peas, sweetcorn, carrots or 2 or more small fruits (e.g. plums, kiwi, apricots).
- **Dried fruit** such as raisins or apricots can also count but these should be limited to a 30g portion size, this is about 1 heaped tablespoon or a small handful.
- **A small glass of unsweetened fruit juice (150ml)** or smoothie can also count but should only be consumed and counted once due to the free sugars which can cause damage to our teeth.
- **80g of beans or pulses.** We can eat as many portions of these as we like but they only count once as although they're a good source of fibre, they contain fewer nutrients than other fruit and vegetables.

## DAY 4:

# PHONE A FRIEND AND CHECK IN

The run up to Christmas can be a busy one where we're stressed with making plans, finishing off last minute Christmas shopping and work before the holidays... we can be so busy that we forget to check in on others.

Amongst the chaos, it's important that we stay in touch, whether that be a five-minute phone call to a colleague, a quick text to a loved one or popping in for a cup of tea with a friend.



**Bruce Findlay**, Health & Safety Manager, shares how he checks in on others, gets the conversation going and encourages people to open up.

## It's good to talk, especially when it's a surprise call...

How would you feel if someone phoned you out of the blue to ask how you are? I know how I would feel; I would love it! It's nice to know that someone has taken the time to find out how I am.

Well, it's something I do regularly. I randomly pick out someone on Teams, phone a kitchen or a mess and

see who answers. Then it's simple, I just ask them how they are. Usually the answer is 'I'm fine' so then I ask them again. This helps people to open up and share how they're really feeling.

Even just engaging in a conversation, asking about how their day has been so far, how their family are keeping or what they're up to at the weekend can show our team and colleagues that they do matter.

The following is an extract from a colleague who I called at random: "Good morning Bruce, you absolutely made my day, thank you so much for the personal check in (it means a lot)."

So, give it a go and just see how not only it makes the person you call feel, but also how you feel. It costs nothing apart from a few minutes of your time. Make that that call and let them know You Matter.



## DAY 5:

# WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

In the UK we waste around 5 million Christmas puddings, 2 million turkeys and 74 million mince pies each year!<sup>1</sup>

Not to mention all the other festive treats, snacks and fruit and veg. But while we're wasting so much, there are still many going hungry.

We should be doing all we can to reduce food waste all year round, but particularly at Christmas. So, can you try to cut back on food waste this month? Think about only buying what you need, getting creative with food leftovers or setting up a compost bin to reduce your food waste.

Our Wellness Webinar on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 14:30 is all about how to have a sustainable Christmas, including reducing food waste over the Christmas period.

Click [HERE](#) to join ESS Nutrition and Wellbeing Engagement Officer **Katrina Francis**.



You can also click [HERE](#) to check out the Love Food, Hate Waste website, which is full of top tips to keep your food waste to a minimum, saving you money and helping you make the most of your food.

**DAY 6:**  
**WARM UP  
WITH A  
CHRISTMAS  
JUMPER**

SAVE THE CHILDREN CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY  
– FRIDAY 10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

Christmas Jumper Day is celebrated  
each year by Save the Children – this  
year it's on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December!



Save the Children

Join us by wearing your favourite festive jumper and raising both money and awareness for Save the Children.

If you're thinking of being more planet friendly, why not upcycle an old jumper from a previous year? Not only is this better for the environment but it also saves you money (which you could donate!) and gives you an opportunity to get creative.

To sign up and donate click [HERE](#).

If you get involved in **Christmas Jumper Day**, send us your photos to: [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk)

DAY 7:

# COOK UP A STORM

HEALTHIER FOOD

Fed up of the same old reheated leftovers following your Christmas dinner?



## LEFTOVER FESTIVE TRAYBAKE



ESS Executive Chef **Jay Averill** has got you covered with his recipe for a **Leftover Festive Traybake** – a sneaky way to use up those

Christmas leftovers with all the classic flavours and no waste!

**Serves 2-4**

*(depending on the amount of leftovers!)*

### Ingredients:

- All your left-over Christmas dinner vegetables and trimmings (e.g. turkey or sliced up pigs in blankets, carrots, sprouts, parsnips, stuffing, roast potatoes)
- A teaspoon of olive oil to drizzle over
- Any leftover herbs (thyme, rosemary or sage)
- A small wedge of brie (or leftover cheese)
- 2-3 teaspoons of cranberry sauce
- 1 teaspoon of pine nuts (optional)

### Method:

- 1 Heat the oven to 200°C. Place the roast vegetables and meat trimmings\* on a roasting tray and drizzle with olive oil, cracked black pepper and scatter the herbs around the dish. Roast for 15 minutes to allow the vegetables to heat and crisp up.
- 2 Break the brie wedges into small pieces and dot around the tray of vegetables, return to the oven for 6-8 minutes to allow the cheese to melt.
- 3 Remove from the oven, drizzle with the cranberry sauce and sprinkle with toasted pine nuts.
- 4 Serve and enjoy!

*\* If adding any leftover turkey or pigs in blankets, ensure the meats are thoroughly recooked.*

### CHEF'S TIP

This dish tastes even better served with some slices of warm crusty bread and/or a drizzle of green pesto.

### NUTRITIONIST'S TIP

If you don't have any leftover cheese or are looking for another way to boost up your protein and fibre, you could add a can of chickpeas to the traybake.

# HALLOUMI PIGS IN AUBERGINE BLANKETS



...And if you haven't got any festive leftovers but still fancy a new festive recipe or you're catering for meat-free guests this Christmas,

give this vegetarian **Halloumi Pigs in Aubergine Blankets** a go, from ESS Executive Chef **Ryan Hopper**.

**Serves 8**

#### Ingredients:

- 500g halloumi
- 2 aubergines
- 1 bunch of basil, finely shredded
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- Black pepper to season

#### Method:

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C.
- 2 Trim the stalk end of the aubergine, then cut into 5mm slices lengthways using a sharp knife.
- 3 Heat a griddle pan until hot then brush the slices of aubergine lightly with oil and griddle for 1-2 mins until slices are charred and tender.
- 4 Cut halloumi into 1cm width (similar to a finger) lengthways to create sticks. Place into bowl with lemon zest, half of the shredded basil and crushed chillies, then toss gently to coat.
- 5 Line a baking tray. Wrap each halloumi stick with a slice of aubergine and place on to tray, seam-side down then brush with oil and season with black pepper.
- 6 Bake for 10 minutes then remove from the oven, drizzle over lemon juice and sprinkle over the rest of the basil.
- 7 Serve and enjoy!



## DAY 8:

# DITCH OR DONATE

Christmas is often a time where many of us are lucky to have an abundance of lovely presents...

But sometimes we can have a lot more than we need. If you're thinking of doing a clear out, why not donate what you can? The below ideas could de-clutter your Christmas while also helping someone else:

- Pop to your local food bank and drop off some food for those who might need it this Christmas. Buy non-perishable items like an extra Christmas pud, can of beans or packet of pasta on your big food shop and drop them off on your way home. Sometimes the big supermarkets have donation baskets near the exit.
- Can you buy an extra Christmas gift and donate it to someone in need? Search your local area for collection points.
- Donate unwanted gifts, clothes or other items to charity shops.
- As a last resort, ditch anything you don't need – but before you do make sure you check if it can be reused or recycled first!

HEALTHIER WORLD

## DAY 9:

# GO EASY AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTIES

HEALTHIER BODY

On average, we gain 0.5-1kg over the Christmas period.<sup>1</sup>

While that extra mince pie or glass of mulled wine doesn't seem like a lot, it all adds up. Christmas parties can be a tempting time with endless buffets and open bars, so remember to be mindful when munching! The below tips can help you to keep in check when out enjoying the festivities:

- If drinking spirits, make sure you measure them out and go for a sugar free mixer.
- Have a boogie – did you know dancing for an hour can burn around 370 calories?
- Enjoy your food mindfully. Fill up your plate then move away from the buffet, this will stop you eating mindlessly and prevent you from eating excess calories.
- Choose the healthier options from the buffet first, going for fruit and veg where possible.
- Choose smaller versions of your favourite Christmas treats – switching a normal sized mince pie for a mini one will help you get a taste of Christmas without overindulging. Did you know, three mini mince pies can have the same calories as one big one!
- Go for half pints or small glasses of wine when ordering drinks – not only will this save you money it will also help to reduce your alcohol intake.
- Try having a snack or meal before the party, you should feel less hungry when you arrive.



1. <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/seasons/christmas-and-new-year.html>



**DAY 10:**

# FILL UP WITH FLUIDS

**When the weather is cooler it's easy to forget that we need to keep hydrated!**

And while the warming hot chocolates and mulled wine are a delicious Christmas treat, it's important to remember about healthy hydration. Make sure your water bottle or glass is topped up and keep sipping throughout the day to be sure you get your 2 litres!

When we're thinking about hydration, unfortunately we don't mean alcohol! If you're attending lots of Christmas festivities try the below tips to reduce your intake. Don't forget that the government recommends that we drink no more than 14 units per week and spread our drinking over three or more days (with some alcohol-free days each week!).

- **Alternate your alcoholic drinks with a non-alcoholic one** e.g. no added sugar soft drink or water, to help you pace yourself.
- **Eat a healthy and balanced meal** based on starchy carbohydrate foods before you go drinking – this will slow the absorption of alcohol.
- **Downsize if you can** – switch your large wine for a medium or your pint for a half – this can save you money and help you cut down on calories too!
- **Go for low or no alcohol alternatives** – alcohol free beer, 'no-secco' or mocktails can all be delicious.
- **Try 50/50** – going for half lager half sugar-free lemonade or wine and soda can help you control how much you're drinking. Did you know that if you switch your glass of white wine for a spritzer with soda it could save you almost 70 calories?
- If at home, **measure your spirits out** instead of pouring them and use smaller wine glasses to control how much you drink.

If you do happen to over-indulge during the festive period, don't worry! There are some things you can do to make you feel better. You may have heard that having another drink in the morning can cure your hangover. This, however, is not the case and is likely to delay your recovery even further! Instead, have something to eat and get up and go for a brisk walk – the fresh air can help you feel much better. Alcohol also causes us to become dehydrated so try to remember drink plenty of fluids before you go to bed and the morning after too.



# DAY 11: VOLUNTEER YOURSELF

International Volunteer Day – Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December

**International Volunteer Day** is a great opportunity to help someone else in need. Not only does it help others, but it's also a great way to meet people you wouldn't usually work with, gain valuable experience and skills and give back to your community.

Search your local area charity websites, Facebook groups or newspapers and see which charities or organisations need volunteers. You could also organise your own beach clean, drop off a donation to a food bank or help out in a soup kitchen.

Alternatively, think outside the box. Volunteering doesn't always mean working for an organisation – instead, can you help a neighbour, friend or family member in need?

Taking time out of your day to help an elderly person with their Christmas shopping, a friend with picking up their Christmas tree or a parent with the Christmas preparations could really make a difference.



# DAY 12: TRY SOMETHING NEW

The short dark days can make life a bit samey and monotonous, but you shouldn't have to wait until the New Year to try something new...

**Why not use the build up to Christmas as an opportunity to push yourself out of your comfort zone and try something you've always wanted to do?**

This could be experimenting with a new recipe, trying a gym class, finding a new route to walk or picking up a new hobby. If you need some extra help to get going with your activity, you could ask a friend to do it with you or ask for it on your Christmas list.

If you try something new, send us an email at [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk) and we can feature it in our January newsletter and hopefully inspire others to do the same.



# Q&A



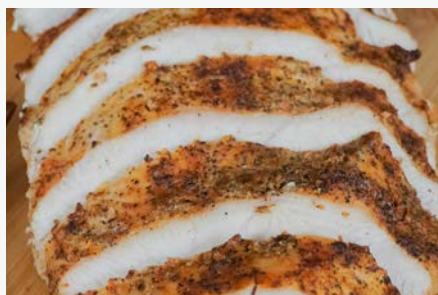
**Our Nutrition and Wellbeing Team are here to answer all your questions.**

If you have a nutrition or wellbeing query that we can help with, send us an email at [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk)!

## Q: How can I make my Christmas dinner healthier?

**A:** While you should still enjoy your Christmas dinner, you can make it healthier (without it affecting you too much) in a few simple ways:

- Fill your plate with **veggies**. While fruit and vegetables should make up around a third of our diet, we should try to think about this with our meals.
- **Turkey** – go for the white meat over brown and without skin. This will reduce the fat content as well as being slightly lower in calories.
- If using meat juices for the **gravy**, wait for them to settle then scoop the fat off the top.
- Cook your **roasties** in vegetable oil rather than lard or goose fat. This will still make crispy potatoes, but they will be much lower in saturated fat. For an extra bit of fibre, you could leave the skin on your potatoes.
- Try making your own **cranberry sauce**, as the supermarket versions are often high in sugar.
- You could mix things up and try a **nut roast**. These are full of fibre, protein, iron, zinc and B vitamins.
- Switch your sausage meat **stuffing** for a plant-based one, which could up your fibre intake as well as reducing calories.
- **Brussel sprouts** are a good source of fibre, vitamin C and folate. Try steaming your Christmas veg to make sure you don't lose too many vitamins and minerals through cooking.
- Serve your **Christmas pud** with custard or low-fat yoghurt, instead of brandy butter, this will help you cut back on calories.



## Q: How can I be healthier in 2022?

**A:** New Year, New You? New Year's resolutions are a great place to kick-start your way to a healthier 2019!

Avoid trying to find quick fixes and fad diets. Instead, try to improve your overall wellbeing. Focus on trying to eat a healthy and balanced diet, while staying active and doing exercise. Remember to keep hydrated and aim to drink 6–8 glasses of fluid every day – you could even put a reusable water bottle on your Christmas wish list!

Did you know that doing 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on at least 5 days a week, can reduce the risk of developing diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.<sup>1</sup> Don't forget that being physically active doesn't have to involve going to the gym – it can include dancing, housework and gardening!

Look out for lots more **Wellness Wednesday Webinars**, **YouTube tip videos**, **Instagram Q&As** and great resources from our Nutrition and Wellbeing Team in 2022.

If you have any topics you'd like them to cover or any wellness questions, get in touch at [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk).

1. <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/seasons/christmas-and-new-year.html>

WELLNESS

# ASK YOUR NUTRITION & WELLBEING SPECIALIST

Ask anything to do with nutrition, health & wellbeing.

Drop us an email and we will get back to you as soon as possible.



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If you have any queries, email and ask your ESS Nutrition and Wellbeing specialist at: [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk).  
Subscribe to **WeAreESS** YouTube channel and follow **WeAreESS** on Instagram and TikTok.

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