

## Christmas breakfast here, Christmas dinner there – how can I start the next year healthily?

Not much longer now, and we'll be starting the most wonderful (*and busiest*) time of the year. At Christmas we get to enjoy festive get-togethers, sociability, and lots of meals. But how can you keep yourself fit and healthy with all this food and drink? We'll offer you five easy tips to will help you out.

### 1 Start with a good breakfast

On the day of a big dinner, be sure to start with a good breakfast. That will help you feel satisfied and reduce the chance that you'll snack during the day or let yourself go at dinner. A good start is half the job.

*Tip:* Choose a fibre-rich, protein-rich breakfast with low-fat or semi-skimmed dairy products including breakfast cereals such as muesli or oatmeal. If you are unsure which breakfast cereals are the healthiest, buy the whole-wheat version without added salt and not too much added sugar.

### 2 Don't skip meals

You may have noticed it for yourself. It seems tempting to skip a meal to compensate for all the snacks and meals from the day before. But skipping a meal increases the risk of fluctuations in your blood sugar level. A low blood sugar level makes you more inclined to make the wrong choices when it's time to eat. And that's exactly what you don't want during the holidays.

### 3 Take the initiative

Invite people over for a delicious breakfast, brunch, or dinner at your home. By doing that, you'll give yourself the space to prepare a healthy meal and reduce the chance of grabbing too many sweets. You get to decide what you have – and don't have – in the house. When you do your shopping, try to be realistic about quantities. Make good estimates and try to stick to them. And, if you end up with leftovers when it's all done, give them to your guests. That makes it easier to resume your healthy diet afterwards.

*Tip:* Baking your own *oliebollen*. (Dutch New Year's treat). Rather than using hard frying fat, use vegetable oils - sunflower, corn, soy, or peanut oil. They contain much less saturated fat.

#### 4 Organise a walk

In all the hustle and bustle, it's all too easy to forget to keep moving. The key is to keep it simple. It's enough to move for a half hour a day. Take a brisk morning walk before your Christmas breakfast or go for a walk in the woods before dinner. Of course, you can go it alone but, with Christmas Spirit in mind, it's a nice thing to do with company. Then you can enjoy breakfast, brunch, or dinner together - fit and happy.

#### 5 Relax

This might just be our most important tip: Don't forget to relax. After all, it's the holidays and you don't have to be too strict with yourself. Whether you choose an hour at the gym or a good book, do what makes you happy. Enjoy all the fun, the delicious dinners and - above all - each other.

Our greatest aim is to promote and maintain your good health. For many people, this is a daily challenge and a little support will help them in the right direction. Do you have any unhealthy habits that you'd like to say goodbye to in the new year? Take a look at [My Health](#). You'll find a whole range of activities, training courses, plans, and workshops to help you make the best of yourself.

Happy holidays!

