

Wellbeing during the holiday season



Community and Public Health

Kia ora koutou,

Summer is a time to share time and kai with whānau and friends. However, it can be challenging to fully appreciate food when there is so much on offer, particularly over Christmas.

Many of us may remember occasions when we have eaten so much that we have felt too full or even sick. The reasons for this might have included 'mindless' eating – when we have eaten a whole packet or plate of something without realising it (and may or may not have felt satisfied at the end of it), then promised ourselves that we'd start a 'diet' in the New Year. That's often a much harder challenge than it seems and could create unhelpful binging/ restricting eating patterns, rather than healthy eating

Our food choices are influenced by much more than ourselves. The food that we're exposed to and which is advertised to us in our surrounding food environment. Where we work, shop, play, and holiday are also a major influence on our choices. While other things also influence our choices, a great way to think about nourishing ourselves to support our health and wellbeing over summer is to be realistic about food choices, enjoy what we eat and really appreciate our food for what it's worth.

Top tips for happy eating on holidays:

1. Focus on **changing one or two things at a time** rather than trying to do everything all at once. For example, eat an extra piece of fruit or bump up your vegetable intake at lunch by adding fresh or leftover vegetables into a sandwich.
2. **'Swap a packet for a piece'** – try a whole piece of fruit, a carrot, or a piece of toast instead of a packet of chips. When offering fruit to kids and adults, cut it up or put it on kebab sticks. People tend to eat more fruit when it's prepared and presented nicely.
3. **Enjoy food.** If you are not enjoying a food, then you're not going to incorporate it into lasting lifestyle change. Find out how you like to eat food by trying different ways of preparing it, for example, cutting, slicing, grating, boiling, steaming, lightly pan-frying, or baking.
4. **Try out new flavours.** Experiment with fresh herbs and/ or different spices. Parsley and chives go well with eggs and salads. Turmeric or cumin can be added to slow cooker meals and casseroles; add one or two mint leaves along with sliced lemon to cold water for a summer refresher.
5. **Eat mindfully.** Though it may be challenging if you are at a social occasion with constant distraction of people talking to you, you can still try to be thankful for your food, notice what you're eating, and where it comes from. Eating mindfully is about eating slowly enough to appreciate and enjoy your food.
6. **Drink lots of water.** There's plenty of reason why you need to stay hydrated like the hot weather and your physical activity. It's always a good idea to pace yourself when drinking alcohol too by having a glass of water for every alcoholic drink. That also helps ensure you have good memories and no regrets!

Te Mana Ora wish everyone a wonderful holiday season this year, see you again in 2023! 😊

Ngā mihi nui,
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