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The Tricky Season



Newsletter from Cornell Health and Nutrition

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From my Garden

This time of year is always interesting in my garden. I know I should be sowing a cover crop to turn under in the spring, or composting, but there are still things growing and it seems awful not to reward that. What's growing? Kale, Swiss chard, sage, chives, lemon grass and, believe it or not, strawberries. The strawberries are sending

It's The Tricky Season

And not just because of Halloween! But the time between Halloween and New Years Day is fraught with food temptations and stress for most people. Between holiday shopping, all that time with the family (or families), parties, cookie swaps it's amazing that most Americans only gain 3 lbs in this 2 month period every year. It's the time of year we all eat things we normally don't - mostly because it's all around us and our will power just can't handle it.

So what's a person to do who wants to watch what they eat?

First, do everything you can to reduce stress. Try NOT to go to every party you (or your kids) get invited to. Figure out the things that matter most and concentrate on those. Is having a beautiful Christmas tree more important than outside decorations? Either forego the outside ones or hire someone else to do it. Is being with your family really important to you on Thanksgiving? Make that happen by trading time at another holiday with in-laws or friends. Hate to cook? Make dinner a pot luck to cut down on

out shoots that will make up next year's crop.

Kale is a wonderful plant to grow: not only is it a "super food", but it gets sweeter the colder it gets. You can actually brush the snow off to pick it. The Swiss chard can survive a light frost, but will not last much longer. When it's really going to be cold, I have covers for the chard, but I figure I only have about 2 more weeks before that won't work anymore. Sage is a traditional Thanksgiving spice because it's usually still alive (let me know if I can send some to you ... I have lots), but the chives have surprised me this year.

On the one hand it's great to watch the strawberries get securely planted before the cold kills their leaves. On the other hand, it's a little daunting to see how much of the garden they have taken over. I'm not sure where I'm going to be able to plant vegetables next year.

The prairie plants have all gone to seed. Most of them keep their seed heads intact, though, which makes great winter food for the birds. Of course, that also means I have to pick the seeds out of the dog's coat every time he runs through there in hopes of catching a squirrel. A small problem to have so I can grow such great plants all summer for the bees and butterflies.

The parsley and rosemary will spend the winter inside to protect them from the icy cold, and also so I can have fresh herbs whenever I want! Thyme also does well indoors, but mine died this summer, so I won't have any this winter.

What are you doing this fall to help make your life easier or more healthy? Now's not the time to put your plans and goals on hold. Now's the

what you have to do.

At this time of year, and especially in tough economic times, money can be a significant stressor. The best idea is to set a budget for the holidays (food, gifts, decorations) NOW. Then stick to it. Your friends, neighbors, and family are all feeling the same way. You'll be the hero if you propose that only the kids get gifts this year, or that there's a \$50 and one gift limit per person, or that you volunteer at a shelter instead of going for that girls' night out. Be creative - you'll be surprised at how much relief everyone will express.

Why reduce stress to help you watch what you eat? Because we all eat in response to stress ... and usually we eat high calorie, comfort foods. They don't actually help us deal with things, but they do make us feel better for a few minutes. But that's the key - the good feeling only lasts a few minutes. So, this year, rather than medicate your stress with food - try to get at the sources.

What about food itself? All those yummy things out on the tables at the parties you do chose to go to ... Here are some strategies to try:

- 1) take very small servings of things on a buffet, then only go back for more of what's worth it.
- 2) move away from the food - go into another room and you'll be less tempted
- 3) eat a healthy meal before you go out so you aren't starving at the party
- 4) watch how much alcohol you drink - it will make your willpower and plan cave in. Follow each alcoholic drink with a glass of water; not only will you drink less, you'll feel better in the morning.

The Sun has Gone to Bed and so

It's time to start taking your Vitamin D3 again. If you live north of 30 degrees north (roughly Atlanta, Albuquerque, Las Vegas), the sun isn't strong enough to generate Vitamin D during the winter, so you need to take supplements (Plus it's generally too cold to expose more than 40% of your skin's surface!). Take at least 1000 i.u.s'. For people with osteoporosis, osteopenia, or any auto-immune disease the recommended dosage is much higher, but have your doctor check your levels as too much can be dangerous; some therapeutic doses can be 25,000 i.u.s.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: Root Vegetables Rule!

If you are lucky enough to have a year-round Farmer's Market like we do in Chicago, you know that about the only things left are root vegetables, kale, winter squash and apples. Root vegetables aren't just for Thanksgiving ... try them anytime. They are easy to store (cold and dark) and to cook (boil, roast or steam).

Roasted root vegetables

- 1 acorn squash
- 3 carrots
- 3 medium sized turnips
- 3 parsnips
- 2 medium potatoes or sweet potatoes
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon thyme

time to build on all the progress you've made this year. Don't let it all go to waste in the last two months. Let yourself indulge in small portions of all those yummy things that are all around us at this time of year: apple and pumpkin pie, cookies, Halloween candy ... Small portions are fine. Healthy living isn't about denying yourself what you love - it's about learning to keep it in perspective. So have a little chocolate or a small piece of pie. But you really don't need seconds or thirds at Thanksgiving dinner, now, do you? Be smart - and kind to yourself.

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salt and pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Wash and peel all vegetables (cut the acorn squash into smaller pieces to peel it)
3. Chop them all the same size - about 1/2 inch cubes and put into a bowl
4. Stir in the olive oil and thyme, making sure each piece is coated on all sides
5. Place in a roasting pan or rimmed baking sheet in a single layer
6. Cook 25 minutes or until softened and starting to brown. Stir once while roasting.
7. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

There are Many Ways to Become a Client

- Want to jumpstart a weight loss program? Clear your body of toxins or fat? I now offer a variety cleansing programs using the #1 products on the market today. There's an 11 day program or a 30 day program (national average weight loss for the 11 day program is 7 lbs.). [Click here](#) to learn more about the programs and products.
- Individual coaching programs to help you meet weight loss or healthy living goals .
- Employer programs to reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, and teach employees about things like healthy eating on the go and stress reduction.
- Group cooking classes to learn how to put healthy meals on the table in fewer than 30 minutes - if you have a group of two to ten friends we can do a single or series of cooking lessons based on the skills of the group.
- Attend a workshop. We give them in person in Chicago or via the web. For a web seminar, all you need is a phone and a computer connected to the Internet. See below for more information about our next web seminars.
- Eating for Peak Performance - Programs for athletes of all ages from middle school to adulthood to learn to fuel your body correctly.
- Group coaching programs if an individual program is too much of an investment.

[Contact me](#) to learn more about any of these services.

Surviving the Holidays Without Losing Your Mind or Your Waistline

Web seminars (\$25) - three choices of times to best fit your schedule:

Monday, November 16 - 7pm central time
Friday, November 20 - 12 noon central time
Saturday, November 21 - 9 am central time

You'll want to hear about this BEFORE things get out of control. We'll cover: ways to reduce stress, holiday party healthy eating strategies; Thanksgiving dinner eating choices; and your questions.

Register now! Space is limited by the web seminar technology.

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