Give Stress a Back Seat This Holiday Season

The year is coming to a close, and it’s time to plan ahead to keep yourself healthy during another fast-paced December filled with social commitments, shopping, cold weather and lack of sleep, all of which can take a toll on your immune system.

*Keys To Better Health™* is here to help you develop a strategy for a stress-free holiday season.

- Strengthen your immune system this month by eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.
- Increase your intake of antioxidants such as vitamin E, vitamin C, vitamin D and beta carotene. Try beets, Brussels sprouts, collard greens, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, onions, beans, and berries.
- Nothing can strengthen your immune system more than getting a good night’s sleep. Lack of sleep can increase levels of stress hormone cortisol and can lead to increased body inflammation. Shoot for 7 to 9 hours for best results.
- Laugh. A lot. Gather the family for a comedy movie night. Laughter lowers stress hormones and can boost white blood cells that help fight infections.
- A potent way to boost your immune system is to exercise and meditate. Exercise slows down the release of stress-related hormones, accelerates the flow of antibodies and white blood cells, frees the body of carcinogens, and can help prevent bacterial growth.

Keeping stress at bay is a good start, but the holidays also present another challenge: unwanted weight gain. The average adult gains just one pound between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day, according to a study from the New England Journal of Medicine.

The problem is that many people don’t ever lose the additional pounds gained, and over 20 years that extra holiday pound starts to add up.

Here are ways to combat the holiday bulge:

- Limit yourself to no more than two servings of alcohol per day, and drink two glasses of water between every drink.
- Balance social commitments with quiet time and family time. Read a book, go for a walk with the children and dog, and do whatever it is that pleases you most every day during December.
- Don’t skip meals before holiday parties. This can result in overeating later. Instead, snack lightly throughout the day to curb your appetite by loading up on fruits and vegetables, which will help satiate your appetite and provide a boost of antioxidants.

*Keys To Better Health™* features colorful tags right on the store’s shelf edge highlighting foods for the holiday season that are “Heart Healthy,” “Organic,” “Low Sodium,” “Sugar Free,” and so much more!