

## Eat, Drink and Stay Healthy this Christmas

Many of yuh are already packing yuh bags to be home in Jamaica for Christmas. Of course the season comes with numerous parties, family get-togethers and visits to people yuh haven't seen for a while.

You yourself may choose to throw a little house party, to catch up with friends and family you haven't seen for some time. Of course food is always central to the Jamaican Christmas experience. The challenge is to enjoy the wonderful food, but stay healthy and keep weight off. How you straddle the principles of eating for good health and indulging in festive foods is moderation. Consuming less fats, sugars and sodium is even more critical during the festive season to prevent unwanted bulges and complications with lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Main entrees of the holiday spread - ham and pork in particular- can still maintain their rightful place on the festive table if efforts are made to avoid eating the fat. Choice cuts of pork or ham will have less fat and more lean. Roasters and turkeys also have their place and can be prepared in a variety of ways. Fish, as a healthier protein source, is becoming increasingly popular during the festive season.

Cooking methods used are critical in the control of fats. Baking, roasting, braising, broiling and steaming are cooking methods that will control fats in the diet. Instead of using fatty pan drippings, baste meats with broth, wine or fruit juices. It is possible to prepare a crispy chicken in the oven instead of the conventional approach of frying.

The festive season does not mean unhealthy eating followed by weeks of trying to lose weight in the New Year. To have delicious, healthy meals during the Christmas season, follow some basic tips. 1. Eat in moderation. Try small portions of everything. There is no need to avoid any food. 2. Watch wine consumption. The more expensive flavours are better to savour and are healthier too. 3. Eat slowly and enjoy the tasty, seasonal dishes. Take time to appreciate each mouthful until you are full. 4. Continue to exercise through the season even if it means taking a brisk stroll in the crisp invigorating December air. As you enjoy the festivities during the Christmas season, resist the temptation to over indulge. This is the best investment in maintaining good health in to the New Year.