



The NK Wellbeing Zone



November/December 2020

Welcome to the Christmas edition of The NK Wellbeing Zone. With the festive season fast approaching, the focus will be on supporting health during a time of year that has its own unique challenges.



Keeping on a healthy track.....

In the previous NK Wellbeing Zone, the focus was on 'gut health' and supporting the immune system. Given the fact that this time of year typically sees an increase in respiratory illnesses, the recommendations made last time still stand and the need to support these aspects of our health is greater than ever. If you didn't see the September/October edition and would like a copy, just get in touch.



Feeling good with festive food.....

As a one-time nutritional contributor to women's magazines, the task never got easier, as I recognised that this can be the hardest time of the year to make good dietary and lifestyle choices. Possible reasons include:

- Having less available daylight, which helps energy. We can end up looking for that energy in refined carbohydrates and more sugary foods
- Mood may be lower (Seasonal Affective Disorder) leading to comfort eating
- Supermarket aisles are laden with tempting and tasty seasonal treats
- It is a season for celebrating and eating party food
- More opportunities to eat
- Being too busy rushing around to eat properly

We need to be realistic though because most of us will indulge in a seasonal treat or tippie at some point – and it is important that we do that! Whilst we may not know quite what shape the Christmas season will take this year, even 'virtual parties' will require real food and drink. Here are a few suggestions which I hope can help you to make the most of the festive season whilst still taking care of your health.

- First things first. This has been a difficult and stressful year for many. One of the symptoms of stress, in any form, is dehydration. Drink 4-6 glasses of water daily, alongside other drinks. Build up slowly if you are not a regular water drinker and don't drink more than one pint of water in any hour. Most supermarkets sell a good range of herbal and fruit teas, including warming, spicy ones, which are particularly warming at this time of year. You might also find ready-made mixes for such delights as Turmeric Lattes and Cacao Lattes as well as coffee alternatives, alcohol-free beers and wines.
- Looking after mental health and wellbeing is essential at any time of the year. Make sure you take regular breaks, even if you don't feel tired. Some people find a Relaxation or Mindfulness exercise helpful. If you are able, a walk around the block or time in the garden for just 30 minutes can be a real tonic for mind and body. Losing yourself in a hobby like knitting, crafts, drawing or just picking up a book, is all good for the soul.
- There is a wealth of seasonal fresh produce available and plenty of opportunities to enjoy this before December 25th. Vegetables are a good source of vitamins and minerals and their versatility means that they can be popped into soups, casseroles and stir fries, roasted, pureed, and in some cases, eaten raw. The infamous Brussels Sprout is a source of Vitamin C, Vitamin B12 and fibre, which is good for gut health. If you have not yet tried a stir-fry based around shredded Brussels Sprouts, I can recommend it.
- Clementines, satsumas and tangerines bring a splash of vibrant colour to any fruit bowl. Rich in Vitamin C, they make a refreshing dessert as well as a tasty snack. Cranberries, a source of Vitamin C, together with dates and figs, which are high in fibre, are now in the limelight. Dates are high in natural sugar and calories, so moderation is key.
- Chestnuts are not just for roasting on an open fire! In season during the winter months, they are low in fat and contain fibre and potassium which can help in the maintenance of normal blood pressure. They work well served alongside Brussels Sprouts or added to soups, sauces and stuffing.
- The much-maligned nut roast has a lot going for it, especially if it is home-made. Nuts contain an array of nutrients including Essential Fats,

iron, zinc, B Vitamins and Vitamin E. Nuts also make a tasty and nutritious snack but are high in calories if you are watching your weight – and watch out for added sugar and salt.

- If you're opting for the traditional roast turkey on Christmas Day, then you have a good source of protein and Vitamins B6 and B12 and if you choose fresh salmon then you will be topping up your Omega 3 (Essential Fatty Acids).
- Delicious Christmas Pudding is potentially high in fat and sugar, although many people only eat this once a year. Its traditional mix of dried fruit and nuts makes it a good source of important minerals like iron, magnesium, manganese, calcium and potassium.

These are just a few of many possible tips and ideas for a healthier Christmas and you will probably have lots of your own. I hope these are helpful.



John's story.....

I was delighted to hear from John, who not only enjoys reading The NK Wellbeing Zone but also wanted to share his own health and wellbeing story in this edition.

'One morning in September, edition No.2 of The NK Wellbeing Zone arrived by post. I read it with my morning coffee and was amazed just how relevant it was to me and an event earlier that day.

I was born in 1930 and am so fortunate and blessed to be in good shape. I have no underlying health conditions and am well able to cope with all of my household and large garden needs. I walk a great deal and always take a 3 mile stroll after breakfast. I have many interests and friends, plus, rather late in life, I have become an active member of a church community. Yes, God is good!

This particular morning I had been very active in the garden (this level of activity would have been frowned on by my very caring family) and one of the tasks was tackling a very overgrown Winter Jasmine. My neighbour, a doctor, appeared. I

said, 'The family wouldn't approve of this' to which he replied, 'John, your body will tell you what you can do.' This was exactly the message and the root of the Wellbeing Zone theme - our gut feeling.

Yes, I am so fortunate to be so fit, well and active in my advanced years. Luck maybe? God is good and I think that attitude has contributed. As it says in Proverbs 17:22 'A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones'. I eat well and cook my own meals - mostly the sort of food my Mother cooked for us as a family. I have never overstretched my body with excessive sporting activities, have always loved walking and have been fortunate to enjoy good health in my later years.

I didn't write this to boast about my good fortune - I just wanted to illustrate for you the essence of well-being. With my life, my family and my friends, I am so blessed. I'll say it yet again, 'God is good'. Kind regards, John

If you have a story you would like to share that might encourage and inspire others on their wellbeing journey or if there is anything in this edition that you would like to know more about, do get in touch.

Wishing you and all those you care about, a happy and healthy Advent and Christmas.....

Elizabeth 

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