

Celebrating Solstice

December 2006

Welcome to winter—the season celebrated by many cultures as a period of inner renewal. Winter solstice is the shortest day of the year and for many cultures the traditional beginning on the New Year. This year, in the Northern Hemisphere, winter solstice occurs on December 21 at precisely 7:22 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Winter Solstice, the shortest day and the longest night, marks the turning point away from darkness and the return to light. In ancient times, as people saw the daylight hours grow short, they were fearful that the sun might disappear, leaving them in permanent darkness. In the days following solstice, as the daylight strengthened and grew longer, there was reason to celebrate. And so the winter solstice is hailed as the birth of the new solar year and a period of inner renewal. So, why wait until January? Celebrate solstice and start a new holiday tradition with a commitment to a healthier lifestyle.

Winter Weather Workouts

The weather outside may be frightful, but don't let winter's cold send you into hibernation. Trade in your usual outdoor workout for a walk around the mall or head to the gym for a safe indoor workout. Prefer the great outdoors? Exercise smart with these winter workout tips.

- **Get Your Doctor's OK**—Cold air can trigger chest pain or asthma attacks.
- **Plan Ahead**—Dress appropriately for the weather and always let someone know your route and when you expect to return.
- **Dress In Layers**—Start with a thin layer of synthetic material, like polypropylene, to wick moisture away from your skin. Next, try fleece for insulation and top it all off with a waterproof outer layer.
- **Top It Off With A Good Hat**—Remember, about 70% of your body heat escapes through your head. And don't forget your gloves.
- **Put Your Best Foot Forward**—Choose footwear that has enough traction to prevent falls.
- **Be Visible**—Wear light-colored or reflective clothing after dark.

Eat Smart

- **Eat a Balanced Diet**—Eat more fruits, veggies, chicken, fish, beans, whole grains and fewer burgers, fried foods and desserts.
 - **Get Serving Size Savvy**—Any food can fit into a plan for healthy eating if you eat in moderation.
 - **Think Before You Drink**—Remember, beverages have calories too.
- Check Your Weight Weekly—It's a good habit to get into.

So, get the jump on New Year's—start celebrating solstice. And if you need some help with your fresh approach to food and nutrition, stop by the office of the University Dietitian for a chat. Just call 54(8-9112) to set up an appointment.