



## The silly season and family tension

Many of us have high expectations of the festive season. Fuelled by the barrage of Christmas advertising featuring happy families, usually enjoying a special meal, we want the same for our own families. Unfortunately, that's not always the case. It might seem obvious, but spending time with family members you don't often see, or necessarily like, can mean that family tensions arise more easily.

Normally within our personal relationships if there are issues, we have license to navigate the situation and choose when we spend time with people. But, at Christmas there's a sense of obligation and expectation, so resentment can often boil over on the day.

It's important to remember that conflict within families is normal, but there are ways to navigate it.

**Check out some tips on how to manage the day:**

### Don't try to resolve issues

Holiday gatherings are not the time to attempt to resolve issues; people can feel attacked on Christmas. If you do have tension with a family member, try to create space between you and them. It's not about avoiding them, but reducing exposure by doing things such as sitting next to other family members. If you want to work on resolving an issue, arrange another time to do so.

### Take time out

Make sure you take time out to destress and relax. Spend time with people who nurture you and doing activities that you enjoy. This will help you recharge so that you're more equipped to handle potentially stressful situations.

Try to also manage expectations. If there is family tension, commit to a gathering for a certain amount of time rather than leaving things open ended. This ensures that you have the reserves to handle yourself and the situation. People are never at their best after a long day of eating and drinking.

### Lots of drink options

Make sure there's plenty of non- alcoholic drinks on hand. We all know that too much booze can lower inhibitions and fuel disagreements. While you can't control how much others drink, you can limit your own intake ensuring that you'll have a cool head if things turn ugly.

### Identify triggers and be mindful

Start conversations which you know people will enjoy talking about like movies, books, or sport. Sometimes catching up on the year's happenings or what's happening in people's lives can trigger sadness or tension. Be mindful of the situation and avoid triggering topics.

### Share memories and experiences

Reminiscing can be a great way to connect with people and focus on the things that are good in your family. Use corny Christmas traditions such as crackers with their bad jokes or games to get everyone to laugh and be a little silly. Think about the games that will work for your family – board games, backyard cricket or water balloons, depending on who's around. It's a great stress release and can help you feel connected.

### Need support during the festive season?

There are many organisations that can support you and your family.

Relationships Australia WA – [www.relationshipswa.org.au](http://www.relationshipswa.org.au)

Family Relationships Online – [www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)





# Dealing with overindulgence this Christmas

Christmas is a time for family, giving and receiving, and gratitude and celebration. With this season comes parties, gatherings, and catch-ups; all of these usually involve eating and drinking. Most Christmas lunch spreads are about bringing families together to enjoy a large decadent meal with indulgent sweet treats, and the best of beers, wines and refreshing cocktails. It can be hard to manage the indulgence – after all we eagerly wait for this festive season each year.

However, going overboard with eating and drinking can harm your health and in turn ruin your festivities. Moderation is the key to deal with overindulgence. A bit of everything is ideal, be it food and drinks or even exercise.

## Tips to avoid overindulgence:

### • Don't fast for parties

Fasting before parties ends up making you feel more hungry and weak and you tend to overeat sugary and high-fat snacks. Instead, start your day with high-fibre and protein meals and savour small meals throughout your day.

### • Stay hydrated

Drink enough water to flush out the toxins from your body. Ideally 2.5L per day will help keep you well hydrated and assist with digestion.

### • Move your body

Make time to exercise and move your body, it will improve your mood, reduce sluggishness and for some people even impact their appetite. Why not take a walk after Christmas lunch?

### • Reduce portion size

Practice portion control. The idea is to sample every delicacy you love without going overboard. Use small-size plates and try sticking to a single helping.

### • Count your drinks

Alcohol is part of Australian culture and some of us enjoy a drink particularly during the festive season. Keep a tab on how much you are drinking; after all you wish to enjoy and not get sick.



## Christmas pudding

*This quick and easy Christmas pudding is definitely a crowd pleaser.*

Serve 6/15 min prep and 10 min cooking time

### Ingredients list

- ▶ 100g butter, softened, plus extra to grease
- ▶ 100g readymade cranberry sauce
- ▶ 2 tbsp golden syrup
- ▶ 100g dark brown soft sugar
- ▶ 2 medium eggs, beaten
- ▶ 100g plain flour
- ▶ 1 tbsp mixed spice, heaped
- ▶ 300g mixed dried fruit
- ▶ 1 medium apple, peeled and grated

### Method

- ▶ Grease a 1.2 litre pudding bowl. In another small bowl, stir together cranberry sauce and golden syrup.
- ▶ Now add two-third of the mixture into the base of the pudding bowl, reserving the remaining portion.
- ▶ Now take a third bowl to beat together butter, sugar and eggs.
- ▶ Add flour, mixed spice, dried fruits and grated apple to the mixture until combined well.
- ▶ Now add the mixture into the pudding bowl over the cranberry syrup.
- ▶ Press a large piece of parchment paper onto the pudding to cover the surface.
- ▶ Put it in the microwave on medium power for 9 minutes or until firm to the touch.
- ▶ Let it rest for 10 minutes before turning out onto a plate.
- ▶ Pour the reserved cranberry mixture on top and serve hot.



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