

# TIPS TO AVOID HOLIDAY WEIGHT GAIN By Bill Black, M.D., Ph.D.



One of my patients, a retired rancher, told me that dogs will eat to excess and become overweight and slow. He said coyotes, regardless of how much food is available, will never overeat and never become overweight, which is how they stay quick and agile. I don't know if that's true, but during the holidays, I often feel more like a dog than a coyote. We used to think people gained an average of five to 10 pounds during the holiday season. The truth is very different. The good news is that the actual average weight gain is less. The bad news is that it appears to be permanent. Researchers at the National Institutes of Health found that on average, Americans gain a single pound during the winter holidays, but that single pound stays on long after the holidays have come and gone. Overall, Americans gain 0.4 to 1.8 pounds during every year of their adult lives, and most of that gain occurs between Thanksgiving and New Year's. Fortunately, there are many ways to curb holiday weight gain.

**Plan active holiday celebrations.** Walk around a local park, ice skate or ski as part of your family's holiday tradition. Get out of the car and walk to see holiday lights. Add a little holiday family touch-football in addition to watching the big game on TV. Take an after-dinner stroll after every holiday feast. Don't let bad weather stop you. Go to the local shopping mall to walk around, shop and view the holiday displays.

**Select foods based on quality, not quantity.** Let everyone in the family choose a favorite food to be enjoyed in moderation. Rethink your kitchen activities. Do you really need to make dozens of cookies? Try focusing instead on just a few really creative holiday foods. Instead of making and giving cookies as gifts, consider preserves, dried fruits or smoked fish.

**Practice good eating habits.** Avoid missing a meal before the big holiday feast. The hunger pangs will lead you to overeat. Drink a big glass of water before a meal. Your distended stomach will tell your brain not to allow your hands to put so much food on your plate. Place all food on a plate and go sit down to eat. Avoid standing at the buffet, shoveling it in. Eat slowly. Enjoy the flavor of each mouthful. Wait 30 minutes before going back for seconds. Give your stomach time to tell your brain that it is full.

Beware the workplace—another holiday calorie danger zone. During the holidays, your workplace is likely to be overflowing with high-calorie snacks. Bring in some healthy snacks, such as a granola bar or some fruit, and stash them in your desk. Eat them when you are tempted to head toward the staff lounge for cake and candy. During holiday parties, load up your plate with healthy options. You can almost always find celery, carrots and fruits in addition to the cookies and soft cheeses. Or better yet, have a filling healthy snack before you go to the holiday reception so you are less hungry when you get there. At any party, focus on family and friends rather than the food.

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## ON MY SOAPBOX *By Pat Dixon, Swan Lady, 591-5455*



Hope everyone had a pleasant and peaceful Thanksgiving. I only wish that all the Holiday decorations now in the stores could have waited at least until after the Thanksgiving Holiday was over. It feels like we are being pressured into the upcoming Holidays way too fast. Halloween wasn't even here yet and the Thanksgiving decorations were already up! I guess I'm just old-fashioned but I would like a little time between "occasions".

Again, most of the calls were about traffic and speeding. Don't know what to say except pace yourself and hope others do the same.

Also, if you are going to be out for a walk in early evening, please be sure you have a flashlight with you. It is dark now by 5:30 and last week when I was leaving for a meeting I almost ran over a man who, I can only presume thought I was going to stop as I left my short street. I always slow down to be sure there are now oncoming cars, (our complex speed is 10 mph max) and suddenly there he was in all dark clothing crossing directly in front of me. Fortunately I was at less than 5 mph so stopping was a cinch, but still if he had some type of light I would have felt much better.

This is for the young female that called me recently. You sounded upset about something but when I asked you what you wanted to say you hung up. Please call me again. Here is part of that article on animal feces that I said I would include. The

article is called Dog's Life, written by Eileen Mitchell. It was in the September 15th issue of the San Francisco Chronicle, titled "Break an unhealthy habit, Scoop pet's No. 2" Feces can take up to one year to decompose and rain doesn't hasten the process; it merely breaks up or spreads the droppings, further contaminating the area and attracting flies and other insects. Bacteria-ridden feces aren't just smelly and ugly, they also present serious health hazards, particularly for children, people with comprised immune systems and pregnant women.

Remember also, with the rains coming, if wipers are on so should be the headlights. If it's just dark, please have your headlights on. One lastly reminder, as of January 1st no hand held cells !

*Have a great Holiday and a Happy New Year and see you in 2008 !!!*



## MANGIA BENE! EAT WELL

By Personal Chef Joe Rizzi  
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### BEEF WELLINGTON

An elegant dish perfect for the Holidays consisting of tender beef topped with fresh herbs and sauteed mushrooms wrapped in a flaky puff pastry.

Yield: about 8 servings

#### Ingredients:

- 1 beef tenderloin, trimmed and chain removed (about 3 to 4 pound)
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup minced onions
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- 4 cups assorted exotic mushrooms
- 2 teaspoons chopped garlic
- 3/4 cup red wine
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1 cup port wine syrup
- 2 pieces of frozen puff pastry
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped mushrooms, Sauteed in butter

#### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Season the tenderloin with salt and pepper. In a large saute pan, heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil. When the oil is hot, sear the tenderloin for 2 to 3 minutes on all sides. Remove from the pan and cool. In a saute pan, heat the remaining olive oil. Add the onions and saute for 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add the shallots and saute for 1 minute. In a mini food processor, add the mushrooms in batches and pulse the mushrooms a few times to finely chop the mushrooms. Add the mushrooms to the onions and saute for 2 minutes. Add the red wine and bring the liquid up to a simmer. Cook for about 3 to 4 minutes or until most of the liquid is dissipated and the mixture is dry. Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley. Re-season if necessary. Cool the mixture completely.

**To assemble;** place the two sheets of puff pastry together, vertically, sealing the ends and forming one big piece of pastry. Lay the seared tenderloin in the center of the puff pastry. Wrap the tenderloin in the puff pastry, tucking the sides in completely. Brush the entire tenderloin with the egg wash and place on a baking sheet. Bake the tenderloin for about 30 to 35 minutes for medium rare, or until the pastry is golden brown.

Remove the tenderloin from the oven and allow to rest for 5 minutes before serving. Serve the Wellington with a drizzle of the port wine sauce and sprinkle with sauteed mushrooms.

*Mangiamo*

## THE WINE ENTHUSIAST - By Tom Barras

I'm a little gloomy right now. Earlier than normal rains and cooler day and nighttime temperatures nudged me into a premature winterizing routine of removing, cleaning and storing the innards of my outdoor barbecue. I'm sad because that rust preventive action, which cannot be delayed or skipped, most emphatically signals the end of barbecue season as well as the attendant joys of Summer's outdoor wining and dining. It is of little consequence that I'm still spiritually in the sunny warmth of July or August, the sobering reality is that Summer is over, Autumn is slipping away and Winter is peeking around the corner.



Ah, but actually, I'm really feeling rather chipper. The arrival of shorter days and longer nights offer me, among other lifestyle aspects, new opportunities for enjoying food and drink that I wouldn't normally consider during Summer: pot roasts, stews, casseroles, braises, and hearty pastas. And because of that, my biorhythmic rhythms have edged me toward the warm, satisfying reds that are better accompaniments to those foods. But don't misunderstand me, I'm not abandoning my white and rosé wines. They still have a place on my dinner table with appetizers, salads, and certain main courses. The main course emphasis is now on reds.

Also, for those cool weather dishes please remember that the personalities of red wines range from "soft and mild mannered" at one end to "spicy, rich and powerful" at the other, and they, therefore, give you mucho flexibility when selecting wines to pair with those dinners. And, please, please don't become a "mono-varietal" wine geek; that is, don't just limit yourself to one type of wine. Put a little variety into your food/wine pairings, just as I hope you do for your dinner.

When you're making your favorite beef pot roast recipe, pass on that Cabernet or Merlot that you normally drink, and experiment with an inexpensive Argentine Malbec or a spicy Spanish red from either the Rioja or Ribera del Duero regions. And if you're into making your own rosemary and garlic spiced roast chicken, (which is infinitely more succulent and tastier than desiccated, store bought ones), disregard that Chardonnay or Pinot Grigio and check out a low priced Pinot Noir. Or if you're feeling French, then try one from the various Beaujolais appellations that I mentioned in last month's article. And finally, don't be timid about asking for recommendations from the wine section manager in the market where you shop. They are knowledgeable wine stewards, trained to provide the information you need; that is, what kinds (there's always more than one option) of wines work with the recipe you have in mind. Keep your options open and try something different. Variety is you know what.





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## CHRISTMAS CONTROVRSERIES

*By Rev. Kristi Denham,*

*Cong. Church of Belmont, United Church of Christ*

With the Advent Season upon us and Christmas planning and shopping on most of our minds, it is time to consider the importance of the stories of the birth of Jesus, found only in two of the four Gospels of the New Testament, and contradictory in both of those. Jesus birth is perhaps the best known and most widely celebrated religious holiday in the world.



Yet most Christians don't realize that the Gospel According to Luke tells us nothing about the three wise men and the Gospel According to Matthew contradicts the manger scene, the angels and the shepherds, and focuses almost entirely on Joseph and King Herod and then the flight to Egypt. We tend to sentimentalize these powerful stories and sew them altogether into a seamless garment that makes sense to us. We think we know what they mean. When we go to the biblical source materials and study the historical context and the implications of what we read there, we discover layers of meaning that challenge us to a faith with more substance, more power, more political implications and more significance than we might ever imagine.

Our first three Sundays in Advent, December 2, 9, and 16, we will explore the many aspects of the birth narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in order to prepare our hearts and minds for the real challenges our faith calls us to fulfill. Sunday worship is at 10:30 a.m. and all are welcome here.

On December 23, we will celebrate the traditional story all put back together again but with greater significance, we hope, and shared with us by our children in the Christmas Pageant. On Christmas Eve, you are invited to join us for a children's telling of the story through a building of the manger scene and the singing of Christmas carols in a brief children's service at 5:30 p.m. Our Candlelight Christmas Eve service at 10 p.m. will bring us the full joy, beauty and meaning of the season. We wish you a very merry Christmas this year!



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## WHO'S TEACHING WHOM?

By Peter Levy

We're adopting Rover. Whoopee!. We'll cherish playing and walking together and cuddling and loving each other. He'll be the perfect dog. Whoopee! ! A new family! I'll grab a sock and they'll chase me. If they grab it we'll play nip-the-hand. I love playing jump-up-what's-on-the-counter? Something good to eat?

I LOVE walks!! Ahh the smells! Let's go over here. There's a dog lets go play! I see you squirrel! Here I come! Oh wait I have to pee here, and here, and over here, ok where were we? Throw the ball WOOF. Throw the ball WOOF. Throw the ball WOOF. There's a bird Woof, there's a cat Woof, and there's the neighbor WOOF WOOF. Once I train my new family they'll be my perfect pack. Often our desires and Rover's differ. Left to his own devices Rover does what comes naturally to him. If we don't teach him, Rover teaches us, naturally!

- Rover has distinct advantages when teaching us. He's a natural born teacher who constantly observes us and learns how to get us to respond.
- Rover is outside and wants in. Does he bark or scratch at the door?? Do we get up and let him in? Rover wants our attention. He shoves his head under our hand. "Pet me." he silently commands. Do we pet him?

Dogs teach effortlessly. They quickly learn to get us to respond to them, often by using things that we actually want to do. Such as pet them or play with them. Sometimes they misbehave to get our response. They'll steal so we'll chase them; they'll bark so we'll let them in or give them a treat. They learn how to get us to stop whatever we're doing. No one wants an accident in the house so if Rover really wants our attention he may indicate he needs to go out. That's sure to get us moving.

We have to make conscious efforts to teach. We have to think, plan and execute. If we don't, guess who wins the Best Trainer contest? Rover behaves consistently. If we are consistent, he'll learn how to fit our vision. It usually doesn't take very long. Dogs love to learn. When we take the time to teach Rover he'll be calm and happy. When we don't, he's likely to be hyperactive and make up his own rules. The choice is ours. Rover doesn't consciously decide; it just comes naturally to him.

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Best Regards, Bernard Accristo

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## CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH TALK

By Angelo Charonis, D.C.

### Prepare for Winter Sports Activities

When snow, ice and frigid weather blast into town, watch out, says the American Chiropractic Association (ACA). Winter recreational activities and chores can pose problems for the outdoor enthusiast whose body is not in condition. Winter sports like skating, skiing and sledding can cause painful muscle spasms, strains or tears if you're not in shape. Even shoveling snow the wrong way, clambering awkwardly over snow banks, slipping on sidewalks and wearing the wrong kinds of clothing can all pose the potential for spasms, strains and sprains. Simply walking outside in the freezing weather without layers of warm clothing can intensify older joint problems and cause a great deal of pain. As muscles and blood vessels contract to conserve the body's heat, the blood supply to extremities is reduced. This lowers the functional capacity of many muscles, particularly among the physically unfit. Preparation for an outdoor winter activity, including conditioning the areas of the body that are most vulnerable, can help avoid injury and costly health care bills. "Simply put, warming up is essential," says Olympic speed skating gold and silver medalist Derek Parra. "In fact, when pressed for time, it's better to shorten the length of your workout and keep a good warm-up than to skip the warm-up and dive right into the workout. Skipping your warm-up is the best way to get hurt." Parra, who took both the gold and silver medals during the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, adds that, "You can complete a good warm-up in 15-20 minutes. And believe me, it will make your workout more pleasant and safe."

Derek Parra and the ACA suggest that you start with some light aerobic activity (jogging, biking, fast walking) for about 7-10 minutes. Then follow these tips to help you fight back the winter weather:

\* Skiing - do 10 to 15 squats. Stand with your legs shoulder width apart, knees aligned over your feet. Slowly lower your buttocks as you bend your knees over your feet. Stand up straight again.

\* Skating - do several lunges. Take a moderately advanced step with one foot. Let your back knee come down to the floor while keeping your shoulders in position over your hips. Repeat the process with your other foot.

\* Sledding/tobogganing - do knee-to-chest stretches to fight compression injuries caused by repetitive bouncing over the snow. Either sitting or lying on your back, pull your knees to your chest and hold for up to 30 seconds.

\* Don't forget cool-down stretching for all of these sports - At the bottom of the sledding hill, for instance, before trudging back up, do some more knees-to-chest stretches, or repetitive squatting movements to restore flexibility.

Angelo Charonis, D.C. practices at Premier Chiropractic Clinic in Redwood Shores Information provided courtesy of the American Chiropractic Association (ACA) [www.amerchiro.org](http://www.amerchiro.org)

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