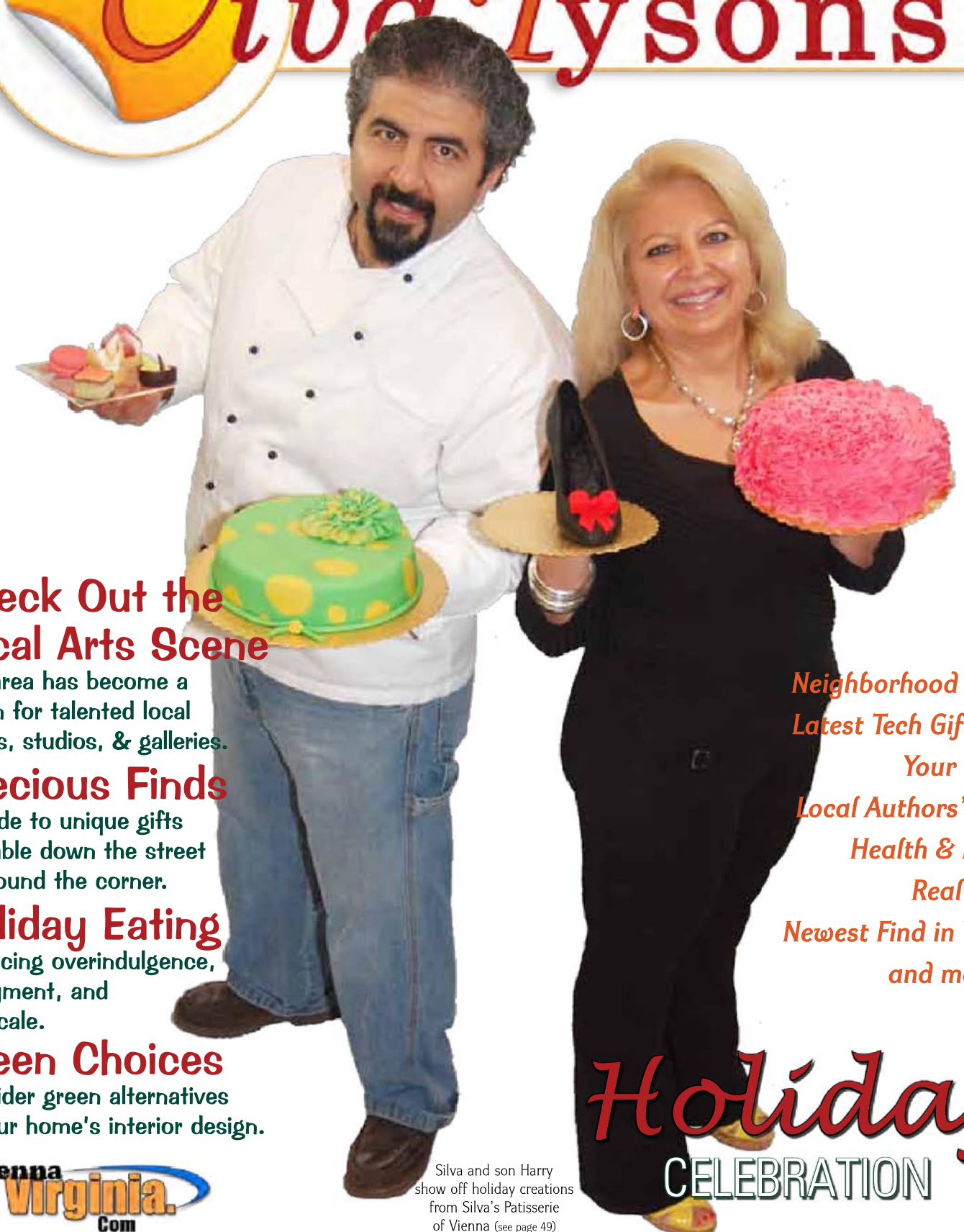




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Holiday Eating

Balancing overindulgence, enjoyment, and the scale.

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Holiday CELEBRATION



Silva and son Harry show off holiday creations from Silva's Patisserie of Vienna (see page 49)

Balancing the YIN AND YANG of



Holiday Eating

The holidays are a time of joy. We look forward to wonderful times gathered around the hearth with family and friends, sipping our favorite beverage. These memories warm our heart. Holidays are also a time of sorrow. Flash forward to January 2nd when you get out of the shower and finally have the courage to step on the scale. These memories put regret in our hearts! So how can we balance our holiday yin and yang?

To avoid having weight loss be “*resolution one*” this year, start by putting a plan into action now. Here are six tips that will help you balance both your life and the scales during the holiday season:

Tip One: Make awareness part of the holiday spirit. Ask yourself, “Where do I want my weight to be to on January 2nd?” Jot the answer down on a piece of paper and post it where you can see it every day. For example: “I want to weigh 135 on January 2nd.” Now don’t lose sight of that goal.

Tip Two: Set into motion actions that will lead to achieving your goal. For instance, continue your exercise program. If you don’t have one, now is the time to start. Don’t wait until the first of the year to begin. Exercise is a great calorie burner and will help you get a jump on the inevitable holiday indulgences. Exercise also increases endorphins which promote a sense of well being, something you will need lots of at this stressful time of year.

Tip Three: Set a carbohydrate limit for the day. Allow yourself a daily total of four to six carbohydrate servings. Since there will be sweets and alcohol everywhere, each time you eat a cookie or have a drink over the holidays, you have to subtract some other carbohydrate from your diet that day, so plan ahead. Here are some other examples of one carbohydrate serving:

*One slice of whole wheat bread OR ½ of a hamburger bun OR 8 stick pretzels
OR 3 Hershey kisses OR ½ cup of ice cream OR ¼ of a medium order of French fries*

Any starchy or sweet food that contains 15 grams of carbohydrate is considered one serving. Read labels and do a quick calculation before you eat. Keep a food log. This helps you know how many carbs you have eaten and how many you have left. It’s not as cumbersome as you think, it will soon be second nature.



The holidays are a time of joy . . . and over-indulgence. Don’t deny yourself. A little planning can keep it all in balance: enjoying the pleasures, while lessening the consequences.

Tip Four: Have a plan before you attend a party. Alcohol adds calories and diminishes your ability to stay focused on your goals. One drink equals one carb. If you know you are going to a party in the evening, save up your carbs for the party. Set a number of drinks for the night and stick to it.

On the day of a party, a good low carb plan might be to:

- Eat an egg white and spinach omelet for breakfast
- Have a decaf skinny latte and a small handful of raw nuts for a snack
- Order a large salad with some grilled chicken or fish for lunch
- Eat a piece of fruit mid-afternoon

Telling yourself you won't eat all day so it is okay to indulge at the party is a formula for disaster. At the party, avoid fried food, any appetizer that sits on bread, and creamy dips. That leaves veggies and protein. Save the carbs for alcohol or a bite of something yummy.

Tip Five: Order lighter calorie meals during the holidays: appetizers, entree salads, and soups are good options (avoid cream soups). At home, pair a soup with a chicken Caesar salad for a quick dinner. Keep roast chicken, cooked whole grain pasta, and washed salad greens on hand.

If you hunt and gather your meals, pick up a salad from the salad bar, a rotisserie chicken, and microwave some fresh veggies. Order sushi and edamame then grill fresh salmon. Stop by your favorite Mexican restaurant and pick up an order of whole beans, guacamole and salsa. At home make quesadillas using whole grain tortillas, grated Cabot 75% reduced fat cheddar cheese and top with the fixings from the restaurant. A little planning can help you avoid the pizza, Chinese, and fast food traps.

Tip Six: Enjoy the holidays. Strike the right balance between exercise, carbohydrate intake (sweets and alcohol), healthy eating and merriment. Make your New Year's resolutions now and you might find the season and the scale better balanced at year's end.



Judy Caplan is a registered dietitian with a private practice in preventive health in Vienna, VA. Her children's book, Gobey Gets Full – Good Nutrition in a Nutshell, is now available. Visit www.GoBeFull.com for more information about Judy and her company, Nutrition Ammunition.



'Tis the Season for 'Holiday Heart'

Whether you're strong or weak, young or not-so-young, your heart will get a workout over the holidays.

The double-whammy of overeating and overdrinking can have serious consequences for anyone, whether it's just one overindulgence or a combination of the two. Doctors and emergency rooms all over the country expect to be treating cases of "holiday heart."

In its mild form, it's an abnormal heart rhythm that can be caused by even moderate amounts of alcohol. Fortunately, the symptoms are harmless and subside as the alcohol leaves the body.

The second type of arrhythmia is serious atrial fibrillation. It can be caused by having four or more drinks for several days in a row. During AF, the two upper chambers of the heart quiver instead of beating in rhythm. It's especially dangerous if other heart disease is involved. A clot could form, which could migrate to the brain and cause a stroke.

Overeating can lead to serious heart problems, but during the holidays, overeating is common. One Mayo Clinic study found that within two hours of eating a huge meal, the risk of a heart attack increases fourfold.

It pays to plan your eating and drinking over the holidays. Decide, for example, that you will only have a before-dinner drink and an after-dinner drink. If someone is pouring drinks, be sure they use one shot of alcohol, not two or more in every drink. At a big dinner, eat more vegetables than meat, avoid fatty foods, and just eat part of the dessert.




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