

FROM pineapple tarts to peanut cookies and yee sang to shrimp rolls, we look forward to indulging in our favourite snacks and goodies every Chinese New Year.

Without a doubt, one of the best things about festive seasons is the food.

But when you are making the rounds to see your relatives and friends, it can be difficult to let go and enjoy yourself without feeling like you are sabotaging your healthy diet.

While it is fine to indulge now and again, you would want to avoid indigestion, or even worse, causing a burden to your body and kidneys.

Here are some eating tips to help you stay healthy throughout the festive period.

### Use a smaller plate

It is always tempting to fill your plate with food, especially at an open house buffet party.

But if you fill a huge plate at every house you visit over the Chinese New Year period, you would almost certainly end the holiday feeling uncomfortably full and bloated.

Instead, try to eat smaller portions at each house you visit. One way around this is to use a smaller plate.

Did you know that using a larger plate actually tricks your brain into thinking portion sizes are smaller, which makes you more likely to eat more?

Scientists call this the Delboeuf Illusion.

Conversely, by filling a smaller plate, you can trick your brain into feeling satisfied with much less.

### Balancing your snacks

Have a few delicious, but healthy snacks in your cupboard such as:

- Nuts and seeds (e.g. pistachios, almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, melon seeds)

High in fibre, protein and healthy fats, a handful of nuts or seeds can make for a nutritious snack, while fibre helps with satiety or making you feel full.

Choose nuts that are roasted, baked or raw.

Avoid nuts that are fried or coated in sugar, honey or salt.

- Fresh fruits

Fruits are packed with lots of healthy nutrients and can satisfy your sweet tooth.

# Tips for a healthy CNY

Trying to stay healthy during this celebratory period can be difficult, but here are a few simple tips to help you out.



There will be many tempting cookies, snacks and other dishes available during Chinese New Year, but it's possible to control our intake by using smaller plates or bowls. — CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

### Drink right

It is easy to focus on the food that you eat and forget about what it is that you're going to be drinking.

Sugary and carbonated drinks will only add extra calories to the diet, without other essential nutrients.

A packet drink alone may already contain about four to five teaspoons of sugar (80 to 100 calories).

For an average healthy adult, it is recommended not to exceed consuming 11 teaspoons of sugar per day.

This amount can be easily exceeded if

sweetened beverages are taken.

Your best option is plain water, which is free from calories and hydrates you the best.

Alternatively, go for unsweetened beverages like green tea or oolong tea.

### Walk or cycle between visits

If you are heading to several locations in one day and they're in close proximity to each other, why not burn some extra calories with a leisurely stroll or bicycle ride?

A slow walk may be helpful to aid digestion.

You can also create active opportunities to expend energy throughout the day, such as by climbing the stairs instead of taking the lift, or playing sports and physical games during gatherings.

These tips are very basic and easy to apply.

Healthy eating should be an integral part of our lifestyle and we should not feel burdened by it.

Let us celebrate our life by taking good care of our health.

This article is courtesy of the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia.