

Australian Medical Association Limited

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604

Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499

Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



EAT RESPONSIBLY – DO NOT LET CHRISTMAS WEIGH YOU DOWN

Australians are being urged to think twice about going for seconds or indulging in that extra helping of pudding when they join with family and friends to celebrate Christmas this year.

As the nation’s waistline continues to bulge, the AMA is warning that over-indulging at Christmas time can cause people to pack on kilos that may prove difficult to shift, increasing the risk of weight-related health problems.

AMA President, Professor Brian Owler, today said that, although Christmas was a welcome time to relax with family and friends and enjoy some good food and the occasional drink, this needn’t come at the expense of longer-term health.

“At this time of year, it is all too easy to put on some weight,” Professor Owler said.

“With tables full of food like roast meats and vegetables, bread, gravy, dips, and decadent desserts like pudding, pavlova and cheese cake, the temptation can be to keep on eating.

“Add in some beer, wine or the occasional Christmas cocktail, and the calories can quickly add up.”

A moderately active adult needs about 2000 calories a day, but some people will consume up to three times that much on Christmas Day – much of which will end up being stored as fat.

Professor Owler said that, while it was important to have fun during the festive season, Christmas weight gain was not inevitable.

“By all means, enjoy yourself this Christmas. But, while food is an important aspect of most Christmas celebrations, it doesn’t have to result in extra kilos,” he said.

The AMA suggests a number of simple steps people could take to avoid excessive weight gain, including:

- drinking plenty of water, including to help space out alcoholic drinks;
- substitute high calorie cream with low-fat dairy or yoghurt;
- use vegetable sticks instead of chips with dips;
- replace the post-Christmas lunchtime nap with a walk or a gentle game like bocce or backyard cricket; and
- giving gifts that promote healthy eating and exercise.

Overweight and obesity has become a major health problem. Almost two-thirds of adults (11.2 million) and more than a quarter of children are overweight or obese, and almost a half do not do enough exercise.

Excess weight is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some musculoskeletal conditions, and some cancers – and as weight increases, so does the risk.

24 December 2015

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Kirsty Waterford 02 6270 5464 / 0427 209 753