

A collection of pumpkins in various sizes and colors (orange, white, and green) arranged on a dark, textured background. The pumpkins are scattered around the central text, with some in the foreground and others slightly behind.

Comprehensive
Wellness

HOLIDAY THRIVE GUIDE

How to Stay Healthy, Happy & Fit
this Holiday Season

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TIS THE SEASON!

Along with the parties and merry-making, the holiday season comes with additional barriers that can make eating well and staying healthy even more challenging than the rest of the year. There is no shortage of rich, indulgent foods, and this is a time when emotions are as hearty as our sugar intake. Added stress that comes with throwing the perfect party, getting all the shopping done in time, or missing loved ones can make it even more challenging to make the best choices. Throw into the mix the busier schedules, loss of sleep, traveling and eating on the go, and this is the perfect equation for making less than ideal food choices.

But hope is not loss! You can still find the balance between enjoying the festivities and staying in control of your health. Use this guide for useful and practical tips and tricks, and you can absolutely thrive this holiday season.

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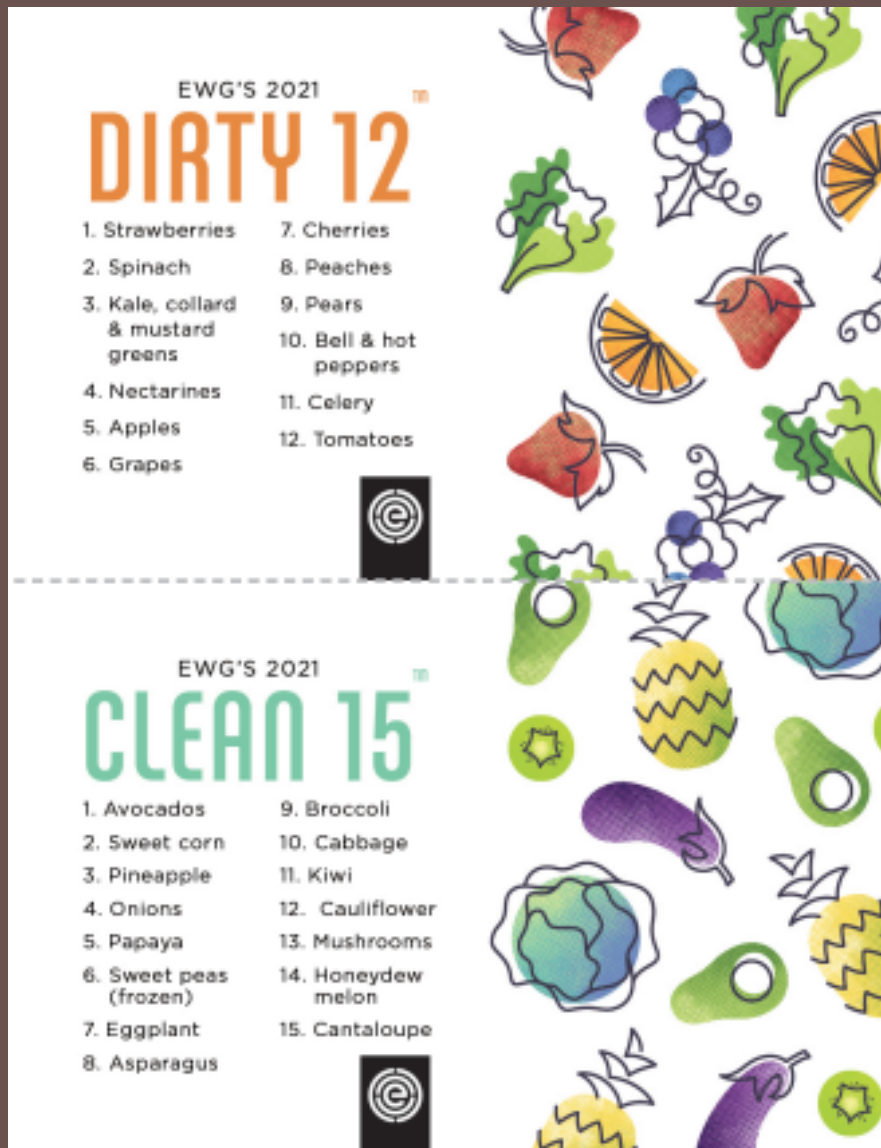


EAT TO THRIVE BASIC GOALS



1. Eat a **vegetable and/or fruit** with each meal and snack.
2. Include a **lean protein** at each meal and snack.
3. Include **fish**, a great lean source of protein and anti-inflammatory omega-3 fats, **twice weekly**.
4. To best **sustain energy**, avoid going longer than 5 hours without a combo of protein & fiber.
5. Get moving – aim for **activity 5 days per week**, whatever you can do (walking, playing with kids/grandkids, yoga, even shopping, etc).
6. Aim to get up and **stand and move** for at least a few minutes every hour.
7. At lunch and dinner, fill **half the plate with vegetables**. Then fill in the rest with a palm-size portion protein and a closed fist size portion starch.
8. **Alcohol in moderation** only – one drink per night for women, and 2 drinks per night for men.
9. Need to satisfy a sweet tooth? Do it, but do so **mindfully**, and give yourself permission to enjoy!
10. Choose **whole grains** over refined – whole grain bread, brown rice, quinoa, barley, oats, etc.
11. Shop the rainbow. **Different colors** indicate different phytochemicals, all which boast different **health benefits**.
12. Include plenty of **unsaturated fats** such as those found in olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds.
13. **Stay hydrated** with plenty of water (may include infused water, unsweetened teas)
14. **Tea and coffee** (with minimal sweetener only) can provide health benefits.
15. Use the EWG **Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen** to decide what to buy organic.
16. Conventional grown fruits and vegetables are better than none at all, so if you currently aren't budgeting for organic, still **eat those fruits and veggies!**
17. If you go out to eat, **look up the menu** ahead of time to plan for your meal.
18. **Get your rest!** Sleeping less than 7 quality hours will affect hunger hormones, making it more challenging to stick to the plan.
19. Don't panic if a meal doesn't go as planned. Don't get hung up on what's behind you. Look forward and **love yourself no matter what!**

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP'S CLEAN 15 & DIRTY 12



CHECK OUT THE DIRTY DOZEN
APP FOR UP TO DATE INFO AT
YOUR FINGERTIPS



LISTEN UP!

**DON'T STARVE YOURSELF
IN ANTICIPATION OF A BIG
MEAL. LISTEN TO YOUR
HUNGER AND FOCUS ON
MINDFULNESS.**

EAT TO THRIVE HOLIDAY HABITS

Have a plan

Pack snacks for travel or shopping days. Meal prep on weekends. Schedule time for exercise. Pre-determine methods of stress relief to avoid stress eating. Create a bed time and routine that you can stick to.

Be Realistic.

Strive for weight maintenance instead of dieting. Don't deprive! You will have room for some indulgences if you practice balance and make the right choice most of the time.

Eat breakfast & avoid skipping meals.

Include lean protein and fiber at meals and snacks to keep you full, energized, and less likely to overeat at subsequent meals.

Strive for adequate sleep.

Aim for a minimum 7 hours to help keep hunger levels under control. When we get hungry, we look for quick sources of energy, i.e. foods with added sugar and fats!



Don't let the "food pushers" dictate your actions!

It's ok to say no to Uncle Frank's "famous pie" or front-desk Deb's "irresistible cookies." You are the one who decides what you eat!

EAT TO THRIVE HOLIDAY HABITS

Make time for stress relief and beating the blues.

Practice self-care in whatever service you prefer: massage, a long bike ride, etc, or take a relaxing bath at home.

Schedule time for yoga, walking, or any preferred form of exercise.

When in doubt, stretching, meditating, prayer and deep breathing are all quick and efficient ways to focus on being calm and well.

Stay active.

Exercise is a very effective method of stress relief! Commit to exercise by teaming up with an exercise partner, a trainer, or group.

Plan active outings with the family – go pick apples, walk around and look at holiday lights, go sledding.

Practice active shopping at the store, mall, or outlet instead of online shopping.

Walk around & look at holiday decorations in the neighborhood.

Volunteer to deliver meals or work at a soup kitchen.

Run or walk a local 5k with friends or family.

Participate in active games such as charades or Thanksgiving touch football.

Take part in a holiday play or holiday parade!

Sign up for a historic walking tour.

Participate in non-food traditions

Instead of baking cookies, try making ornaments or holiday wreathes with the kids.

Decorate your home as a family.

Instead of stuffing stockings with candy, try non-sweets items such as toys, ornaments, lottery tickets, toiletries, hand sanitizer, fruit, nuts and yes, even socks and underwear!



At Meal Time...

Relax.

Savor.

Enjoy.





PARTY SURVIVAL

Bring a healthy dish to contribute.

Look for something high in fiber and/or lean protein and low in calories. Some ideas include:

Veggie tray with a healthy homemade dip (see recipe section)

Apple slices with 'Pumped Up Pumpkin Dip' (see recipe section)

Chili or broth-based soup

Mini veggie and hummus sliders on whole wheat bread

Bean dip and whole grain pita chips

Fresh veggie and/or fruit salsa with baked whole grain chips.

Roasted veggies

Lean protein skewers (think chicken satay)

Drink plenty of water during the day. This is easy as grabbing a refillable water bottle!

Create a smart party plate.

Walk the buffet table once, and look at all the food offerings before committing.

Use a smaller plate.

Only go through the food line once. Eat slowly and enjoy your food.

Use the $\frac{3}{4}$ plate rule:

- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate veggies, fruit, and whole grains.
- Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate with lean protein such as steamed seafood or grilled poultry and meats.
- Leave the last $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate for more decadent items



PARTY SURVIVAL

Drink Smart.

Most holiday festivities involve seasonal libations. These can be very high in calories and don't satiate like food does. Buttered rum, margaritas and eggnog are some of the top offenders!

Stick to lighter drinks such as wine, light beer and liquor mixed with soda water. Slow your drinking rate by alternating each alcoholic beverage with a non-alcoholic choices such as a full glass of water, or sparkling water with a lime.

Every bite counts!

Many appetizers are about 60 calories per bite... those bites can add up quickly!

Socialize AWAY from the buffet table so as not to be tempted to continue to graze. Use the time to catch up with friends and family members (no one wants to talk to someone whose mouth is full of spinach dip!).



Remember...
**CHOOSE FOODS YOU LOVE
OR THAT SOUND
INTERESTING.**

**ALLOW YOURSELF TO SAY
NO TO THE OTHERS.**



Fit & Healthy Hosting

Ensuring your guests have plenty of delicious and lightened up options...

Lighten up your recipes:

- Use low fat instead of full fat dairy in casseroles, cream soups and mashed potatoes.

- Sub sources of fat in baked goods. Use avocado, yogurt, applesauce or mashed black beans.

Add flavor instead of fat & sodium: use fresh herbs, spices, vinegars, citrus, and vegetables.

Use naturally sweetened fruit instead of sugar when possible.

Roast vegetables to develop natural sweetness. This helps you avoid adding extra fat or sugar.

Choose leaner cuts of meat. Bake, grill, broil, roast, steam... instead of fry or sauté.

Offer plenty of non-alcoholic options:

Fruit infused waters

Festive unsweetened teas (herbal zingers are great!)

Sparkling waters

Offer fresh and light appetizers:

Fruits and vegetable yogurt-based dips

Whole grain crackers or pita & hummus

Fresh salsa and baked whole grain tortillas

Serve meals restaurant style. Have everyone make their plates at the counter before sitting down to the table. People will be less tempted to go back for seconds if the food is not sitting at the table in front of them.

Start meals with a volumetric salad or broth based soup.

Get creative with old favorites!

Instead of sweet potato casserole, try chipotle roasted sweet potatoes

Instead of green bean casserole, try fresh roasted green beans with shallots & mushrooms

Instead of mashed potatoes and gravy, try a 50:50 mix of mashed cauliflower and potatoes with roasted garlic

Prepare one spectacular dessert instead of multiple types.

Serve on smaller dessert plates. Or try lighter fruit-based dessert:

- Fruit crisps
- Chocolate covered strawberries
- Balsamic berries with whipped ricotta
- Pumpkin based desserts



HOLIDAYS ARE ABOUT

*Experiences, joy, love...
not things or perfect meals.*



Pack a cooler before hitting the road. Stock up on healthy bites for long car trips. Options may include:

Hummus and pre-cut vegetables

Sandwiches or wraps with veggies and lean proteins (low sodium deli meat, leftover grilled chicken breast, beans, hummus, low fat cheese) on whole grain wraps, pitas or breads.

Single servings of yogurt

Cheese sticks

Fresh fruit

•Hard-boiled eggs

Pack shelf stable items when needed. These may be useful when catching a flight, when no cooler is available, or to stock in the car for a full day of shopping.

Nuts or trail mix: pre-portion into snack sized bags.

Peanut butter sandwiches on 100% whole wheat.

Granola or protein bars: look for ones with less than 10gm sugar, at least 5gm protein.

Whole fruit such as oranges, apples, bananas, nectarines, pears, or peaches.

Tuna snack packs (look for those with lower sodium, canned in water)

Instant oatmeal packets or quick-oats. Just add hot water and stir in nuts & dried fruit.



Eating Well On The Road

Traveling for the holidays?
No problem!

If you need to stop for a quick bite, you can still make decent choices:

Choose restaurants that offer healthier options such as made to order sandwiches and salads

Be an informed customer- check menus online to be sure healthy choices are available.

Fill up on fiber. Try veggie-packed salads and sandwiches or vegetable soups and chilis.

Choose made to order sandwiches on whole grain bread wraps, breads or pitas.

Add lean protein to sandwiches and salads: try chicken, turkey, lean meats, low fat cheeses, beans, seeds, baked falafel and hummus.

Avoid sugar sweetened beverages. Instead choose water (still or sparkling), unsweetened tea (hot or cold) and unsweetened coffee.

HOLIDAY RECIPES



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Appetizers & Snacks

White Bean & Walnut Dip with Rosemary

2 cans white beans, rinsed and drained
½ cup walnuts, lightly toasted
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil (or walnut oil)
1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
Zest from 1 lemon
Juice from 1 lemon
2 sprigs fresh rosemary, leaves removed
Freshly ground pepper and a pinch of salt to taste

1. Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth.
2. Let chill for at least 30 minutes before serving.
3. Serve with fresh vegetables and homemade whole grain pita chips

Creamy French Onion Dip

2 cups chopped sweet onion
2 Tb olive oil
2 cups fat-free, plain Greek yogurt
¼ cup light mayonnaise
¼ chopped fresh parsley
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp white pepper
¼ tsp garlic powder

1. Heat sauté pan over medium heat. Add olive oil and chopped onions and cook over medium to medium-low heat for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onion is browned and very tender. Set aside to cool.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together remaining ingredients.
3. When onion is cooled, add to yogurt mixture.
4. Allow to chill for at least 30 minutes before serving.
5. Serve with whole grain pita chips and fresh vegetables.



Appetizers & Snacks

Toasted Pita Crisps

Serve with hummus, or one of the above dips.

1 pack whole wheat pita

1/4 tsp sea salt

1/4 tsp ground black pepper

11tsp seasoning of choice (try any combo of garlic powder, onion powder, curry, cumin, oregano, parsley, thyme, etc.)

Non stick cooking spray or olive oil in mister

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Lightly coat baking sheet with non-stick spray or mist with EVOO.

Cut pitas into triangles, and spread onto baking sheet. Lightly coat pita pieces with olive oil or non-stick spray.

Mix together seasonings. Sprinkle over pita pieces.

Bake in preheated oven for 10-15 minutes until pita is lightly browned and crispy.

May also sub salt, pepper and savory seasonings for cinnamon, nutmeg and a touch of brown sugar- this variety goes great with pumpkin dip.

Pumpkin Dip

1/2 cup dates

Water

4oz light cream cheese, at room temperature

1 cup fat free ricotta

1 can pure pumpkin

1/3 cup pure maple syrup

2tsp pumpkin pie spice

1tsp cinnamon

1. Let dates soak in water for 30 minutes, then drain. Pulse dates in a food processor until finely chopped.
2. Add cream cheese and ricotta to food processor and process until creamy and fairly smooth (will see some pieces of date still- this is fine).
3. Add pumpkin, maple syrup and spices and pulse until well combined.
4. Service with apple slices or spiced pita chips.



Appetizers & Snacks

Artichoke Stuffed Mushrooms

24 ounces mushrooms, stemmed and cleaned

1Tb olive oil

1 onion, diced

1 garlic clove, minced

¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper

½ tsp dried thyme

1 13.75oz can artichokes, drained and chopped

8oz light cream cheese, room temperature

1 cup part skim shredded mozzarella

2Tb parmesan grated

2Tb panko bread crumbs

1Tb white balsamic

Lemon juice from 1 lemon

1 handful parsley, chopped

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a 13x9 baking dish with non-stick spray.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook the onions until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, stir over heat another 30 second then remove from heat.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and stir in the salt, pepper and thyme. Then mix in the artichokes, cream cheese, mozzarella, parmesan, bread crumbs, balsamic and lemon juice.

Stuff the mushroom caps with the mixture and bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes. Then turn the broiler on for about 2 minutes to brown on top- watch closely to ensure the mushrooms don't burn.

Festive Sides

Roasted Beet & Apple Salad

8 medium sized beets, washed well
2 Tb extra virgin olive oil
Salt & pepper
2 large granny smith apples, cut into bite-size pieces
6 ounce bag of baby spinach
1/3 cup salted, shelled pistachios
4 ounces soft goat cheese, crumbled
1/4 cup good quality olive oil
1/2 cup good quality balsamic vinegar
1 Tb Dijon style mustard
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Wash and trim tops and bottoms of beets. But leave the beets whole, and do not peel.

Place beets in 2 separate sheets of aluminum foil (4 on each sheet). Sprinkle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Fold foil over beets tightly to form two little foil packets. Place on baking sheet and roast in oven for about an hour. Remove beets from oven and let cool.

Once beets are cool enough to handle, peel the skin from the beets, cut into small wedges.

Place spinach in a large bowl. Top with apples and beets.

Whisk together olive oil, balsamic vinegar, mustard and a pinch of salt and pepper. Pour over salad and toss to combine. Sprinkle salad with pistachios and goat cheese and serve. Makes 6 servings.

Rosemary Roasted Acorn Squash

2 acorn squash
2Tb olive oil
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp ground black pepper
2Tb minced fresh rosemary
1/4 cup grated parmesan

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly coat baking sheet with non-stick spray.

Slice acorn squash in halves and scoop out seeds. Slice each half into four wedges.

Whisk together olive oil, salt, black pepper, rosemary and parmesan in a large bowl. Toss squash wedges in the olive oil mix. Spread evenly on the prepared baking sheet.

Roast until browned, around 30-40 minutes, flipping halfway through.

Festive Sides

Balsamic & Bacon Brussels

1 slice bacon, diced
1Tb olive oil
1 leek, cleaned and thinly sliced
1 pound brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered
2Tb water
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp ground pepper
2Tb balsamic reduction

Cook diced bacon in large sauté pan over medium heat until bacon edges start to brown and crisp up, about 2-3 minutes.

Add olive oil, leeks, and brussels sprouts to pan. Spread evenly and let sit for a good 5 minutes before stirring so brussels have a chance to brown. Stir every 5 minutes until brussels are browned and edges are crisp, a total of 15 minutes. Add 2tb water, salt and pepper and cook another 5 minutes. Stir in balsamic reduction and remove from heat.

To make balsamic reduction, heat 1 cup good balsamic vinegar with 1Tb honey or maple syrup over medium high heat until it reaches a boil. Reduce to a simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened and reduced by half, around 10-15 minutes.

Harvest Roasted Sweet Potatoes

3 sweet potatoes, chopped
1 red onion, chopped
2 Tb olive oil
¾ cup pomegranate arils
1/3 cup pepitas, toasted
2Tb roughly chopped parsley
1/4 cup orange juice (preferably fresh)
2Tb olive oil
1Tb Dijon
1Tb honey
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss sweet potatoes and onion with 2Tb olive oil and a pinch salt and fresh ground pepper. Spread evenly on baking sheet and cook for 40 minutes, stirring once halfway through. Set aside.

Meanwhile, remove arils from pomegranate. Place in a large bowl along with pepitas. Gently stir in sweet potatoes and onions and toss to combine.

3. Mince the parsley- whisk in orange juice, olive oil, Dijon and honey. Pour dressing over vegetables mixture and gently toss to coat. Add S&P to taste.

Lightened Up Desserts

Chocolate Avocado Mousse with Pomegranate

1 avocado
1 banana
¼ cup cocoa powder
¼ cup unsweetened coconut milk
3Tb honey
½ cup fresh pomegranate seeds

In a food processor, blend avocado, banana, cocoa powder, coconut milk and honey until smooth. Divide among 4 small dishes and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. When ready to assemble: divide pomegranate seeds over top the mousse.

Caramelized Pineapple with Spiced Cream

1 pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into 8 long slices
1tsp fresh lemon
Juice from one lemon
2Tb honey, divided
1/4 tsp Ground ginger
1/4 tsp Ground nutmeg
2tsp coconut sugar
2tsp coconut oil
½ cup plain, non-fat yogurt
1Tb Dark Rum (may also use bourbon, or leave out altogether)
1tsp vanilla

Mix the lemon juice, lemon zest, ginger, nutmeg, and 1Tb honey in a small bowl. Heat coconut oil and coconut sugar in a nonstick pan. Stir until combined and bubbly. Add the pineapple, and cook over medium high heat for about 8-10 minutes, turning regularly to allow to brown evenly. Pour in the spiced lemon sauce and bubble for a few seconds, then remove from heat and toss pineapple to coat evenly. Meanwhile, whisk together yogurt, vanilla, 1Tb honey, and a couple shakes of nutmeg. Serve each pineapple slice with 1Tb spiced cream.

Lightened Up Desserts

Balsamic Pear with Ricotta Cream

1 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
¼ cup honey, divided
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
2 cups sliced pears
1tsp cinnamon

Put ricotta cheese, 2 Tb honey, vanilla, cinnamon in a food processor. Process until smooth and creamy, 1-2 minutes, scraping bowl occasionally. Chill for 2 hours for best results.

In a small saucepan, combine vinegar and remaining 2Tb honey. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and allow to simmer about 2 minutes until starts to thicken. Set aside to cool completely.

When vinegar is cooled, toss pears in with vinegar.

Divide ricotta cream among four glasses. Top with balsamic pears.

Salted Dark Chocolate Cookies

3 ripe bananas, mashed
½ cup peanut butter
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
½ cup chocolate chips
¼ tsp sea salt

Preheat oven to 375. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Blend all ingredients (except chocolate chips) with a hand mixer, then stir in the chocolate chips.

Drop by rounded spoonful on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with sea salt. Bake until firm, 15-18 minutes. Makes about 18 cookies.

Some final thoughts...

The holidays don't have to be synonymous with weight gain! If you have had a “bad” meal, day, etc., move on.

Being healthy and well is all about finding balance from meal to meal and day to day. Eat the nutrient dense foods most of the time, and enjoy those decadent foods from time to time.

Plan, plan, plan! Then... have a backup plan! Plan healthy meals and back up meals. Know what the best on the go options are, and bring healthy snacks along.

Adjust your expectations. No one is expecting perfection. Striving for just one health-improving goal each day can lead to big changes.

Cheers to your health and happiness!
- Your Comprehensive Wellness Team