

WIN A TRIP FOR 4 CONTEST
 Subscribe to TravelAlerts.ca and stay informed of the best travel deals. **ENTER NOW**

-28°C Grande Prairie Clear **5 day forecast** Click here
 Weather Sponsorship Available!

DAILY Herald-Tribune
 Grande Prairie, Alberta

Select a Publication:
 Careerad.com Obituaries
 Purchase Classified Archives

SUBSCRIBE MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2008

News Sports Special Sections Business Arts/Life Contact Us

Local News / Regional

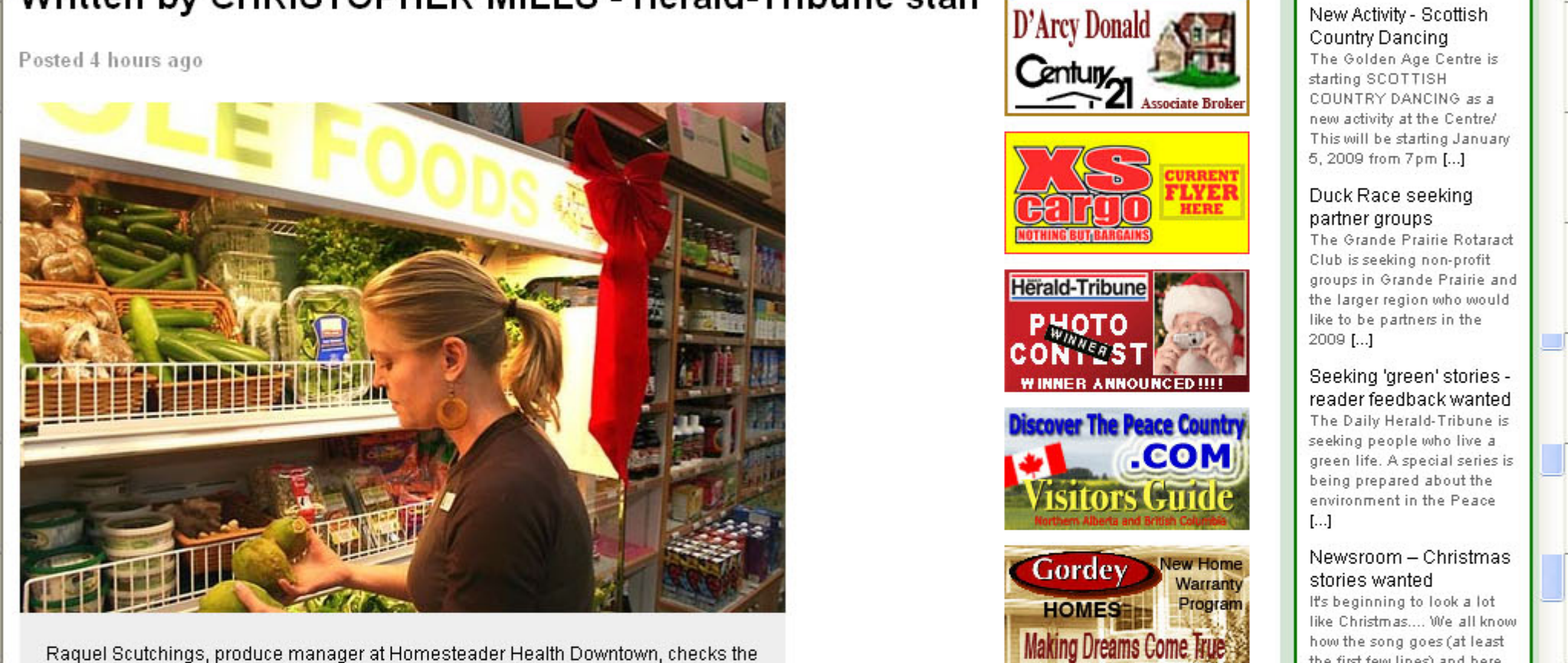
GRANDE PRAIRIE INN We want you in our bed \$139

Home > news > Local News / Regional > Say ho, ho, ho to healthy eating - Moderation is key to having a healthy holiday season

Say ho, ho, ho to healthy eating - Moderation is key to having a healthy holiday season

Written by **CHRISTOPHER MILLS** - Herald-Tribune staff

Posted 4 hours ago



Raquel Scutchings, produce manager at Homesteader Health Downtown, checks the produce to make sure it's fresh for Christmas shoppers seeking healthy snacks. Photo: Christopher Mills

'Tis the season to be healthy.

Along with presents, carols and freshly-cooked turkeys, Christmas has become synonymous with treats and poor eating habits. Every year, people consume copious amounts of candy canes, cookies and other home-baked goods.

There is no reason Christmas can't also become synonymous with health. It's time to start examining some nutritious alternatives to the usual Christmas goodies to ensure that people have a healthy and happy holiday season. And, as always, moderation is key.

"Anytime you have a holiday, there's always the temptation and opportunity to overeat, with all the family get-togethers and Christmas parties and things like that," said Meg Irwin, Healthy Weights project lead for Peace Country Health. "The main (issues) would definitely be watching portion sizes and ensuring that you're eating well with Canada's Food Guide, as to how much and what types of food you're consuming."

Over the years, portion sizes have gotten bigger and bigger, as eating as much as you want (or as much as you can) has become the norm, said Irwin.

"People have a hard time seeing what an actual portion size is according to the food guide," she said. "It's not necessarily the types of food, but the amounts people are eating."

Continued After Advertisement Below

Advertisement

Homesteader Health Downtown, a local health food store, doesn't see much of a change in business at this time of year. Produce manager Raquel Scutchings said despite the time of year, people tend to evaluate their health and make health-related decisions on a daily basis.

Christmas means a lot more baked goods, which are usually fairly healthy, but can still be a bit of a health risk, especially if they're over-consumed, said Scutchings.

"Some of the unhealthy eating comes in, but a lot of people do more baked goods come Christmas time. So right now, a lot of baked goods go out. We're selling lots of that," she said. "Generally, baked goods are healthy, but things like shortbread, that's the time of year, once a year, that everyone seems to think, 'OK, we're going to go off the wagon now and eat all this stuff,' and then come January we find we do a lot of cleanses."

People are also a lot more health-conscious these days with the uprising of wheat-free and gluten-free diets.

"A lot of people aren't so much buying food as they are making their own foods now because they can't get it anywhere, so they have to bake it," Scutchings said. "But this is also the time when a lot of our organic chocolates come out, things like that, so there is definitely an increase of sales in snack foods, chocolates, dried fruits."

Like Irwin, Scutchings said overeating is more of an issue than unhealthy foods at this time of year, so there needs to be an emphasis on self-control.

"Stick with your normal regime and try not to over-consume too much, because you do get digestion upsets and constipation," she said. "Young kids will over-consume too much so they're getting sick and throwing up."

Health also becomes a concern around the holidays because of travel, disturbances in natural schedules and interaction with lots of friends and family.

People need to make sure their immune systems are strong, said Scutchings.

"That's usually when the flu bug tends to go around," she said. "If you're staying healthy ... it's not too bad."

Some of the key recommendations for maintaining good holiday health made by www.healthcastle.com include eating regularly, so as not to get hungry and binge; watching portion and limiting high-fat foods; switching to low-calorie egg nog and alcohol; drink lots of water and get plenty of physical activity.

As far as healthier snack alternatives go, if people are looking and are worried about snacks being unappealing to children or guests, try to find ways to disguise them or make them more fun.

One example, according to www.familyeducation.com, is to take a bunch of red and green fruits – such as kiwis, apples, grapes, strawberries, cherries and cranberries – and chop them up, then arrange them on a platter to make them look like a Christmas wreath.

Not only are healthy snacks good for physical health, they also provide opportunities for creativity and education.

Holidays should not be a time to let go and abandon healthy practices. Watching the foods you eat and staying active will only enhance the Christmas season, making sure everyone is in the best shape possible to enjoy some time off and visits with loved ones.

Article ID# 1358909
 Share: Facebook | Google | Delicious | Digg | Furl | Mix | Linked In

Canoe Klix Advertise!

Calgary homes See how calgary REALTORS® help you Buy, sell, succeed. Contact us now.	American Express® card A no-fee Air Miles® credit card Apply & earn 150 bonus Air Miles	Free credit report Canada Free credit report and credit score for Canadians in just 60 seconds.
---	--	--

Comments on this Article. You are currently not logged in

Discuss this Article
 You are currently not signed in. Sign-in | Join

Submit

Topic guidelines: We welcome your thoughts, stories and information related to this article. Please stay on topic and be respectful of others. Keep the conversation appropriate for interested readers.

Local News / Regional Articles:

- "Behind the eight-ball" - Some last-minute shoppers resort to late-night – or early-morning – trips to catch up
- Despite loss of home, Jones says 'we consider ourselves lucky'
- Prairie Art Gallery building may not open until February 2011
- Paying it forward - Kids remind shoppers what Christmas is really about with local campaign
- Valleyview duo charged with attempted murder
- Sensational sliding - Suicide Hill ranks as best for sledding in GP
- Outdoor rinks ready to go
- 'Tis the season to beware of scams
- One charged in Peace River brawl
- Home destroyed by fire - No one injured; neighbours say family had just recently moved in

[More Local News / Regional >](#)

Past 7 days
 Archive Information
 Search

D'Arcy Donald
 Century 21 Associate Broker

X5 cargo
 CURRENT FLYER HERE
 NOTHING BUT BARGAINS

Herald-Tribune
 PHOTO CONTEST
 WINNER ANNOUNCED!!!!

Discover The Peace Country
 VISITORS GUIDE
 VISITORS GUIDE

Gordey
 HOMES
 Making Dreams Come True

Advertise HERE
 Millions of Page Views per year!

TELUS

Save over 15% with a TELUS home bundle.

Home phone + Long distance + Internet

[Learn more](#)

Canoe Klix Advertise!

American Express® card
 A no-fee Air Miles® credit card Apply & earn 150 bonus Air Miles

Santas choice christmas hampers
 Christmas & summer food and gifts Start saving now! Free catalogue

Train with the best, CDI College
 A new career in business, health care and technology. Choose now!

Work at home
 Discover home businesses in Canada. Request free info today.

\$0 - Free Canada Credit Report
 View your 2008 Canada Credit Report Plus get your Score in 60 seconds.

UR Grande Prairie
 View, submit, participate
 Interacting with your community

SUBMIT JOIN | SIGN-IN
 Community Sports

canoe 411

Business Name
 City
 Find a: Business Person
 Search

Articles & Blogs

New Years Eve Dance
 The Golden Age Centre is holding a New Years Eve Dance on December 31, 2008. Tickets in advance ONLY. Purchase tickets by December 30, 2008 [...]

New Activity - Scottish Country Dancing
 The Golden Age Centre is starting SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING as a new activity at the Centre/ This will be starting January 5, 2009 from 7pm [...]

Duck Race seeking partner groups
 The Grande Prairie Rotaract Club is seeking non-profit groups in Grande Prairie and the larger region who would like to be partners in the 2009 [...]

Seeking 'green' stories - reader feedback wanted
 The Daily Herald-Tribune is seeking people who live a green life. A special series is being prepared about the environment in the Peace [...]

Newsroom - Christmas stories wanted
 It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... We all know how the song goes (at least the first few lines) and here at

Newsroom - Obama coverage
 Whenever there is a major world event I always find it interesting to scan websites from around the world and media outlets in different countries

Council's In Grande Prairie Have Been Irresponsible With Aquatics Centre Decisions
 Here are a few important things to consider. Council had to increase the cities borrowing limit in part to fund this project. (Debentures are

Newsroom - photo galleries
 As the editor in charge of our website, I spend a lot of time surfing the web, looking at other news sites, seeing what other

Newsroom - seeking Halloween fun
 The countdown to the annual day of spooky fun is on. We're only a few days from Halloween and we here at the Daily Herald-Tribune

Sign up for
 the latest, breaking news, weather, sports and more
 sent right to your inbox!

What are these icons?
 = Photo Gallery
 Click here for the icon legend

Calendar

Today

"Four Seasons" Toni Schuler Show & Sale
 "Imagine Me" Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Annual Campaign
 Classic Country Tour
 New Activity - Scottish Country Dancing
 You Need Your Influenza Immunization

Merry Christmas
 from Doctors and Staff at Northern Vision Centre

Holiday Hours...

December 24th: 8am-1pm
 December 25th, 26th, 27th & 28th: CLOSED
 December 29th, 30th
 8am-5:30pm
 December 31st
 & January 1st
 CLOSED

NVC
 NORTHERN VISION CENTRE
 12111-99 Street, Grande Prairie (780) 532-2634

Retail or Specialty Stores and Services