

MARIA'S PARTY DETOX

Shops are brimming with people, Carol singers have been knocking on people's doors for the past 2 weeks. Firm's Do's and Christmas Lunches are almost over. Christmas is just a couple of days away and the party season is well underway. There will be New Year celebrations as usual. What has all this to do with Nutrition? Food and drink will be consumed in vast quantities – an over abundance of goodies is a sure way of having a successful party and great fun, so we are told.

While consuming delicious foods and drinks certainly adds to the enjoyment, it's the over-indulgence, not once, but continually, over the festive season that will bring without doubt many people to the chemist's counter, or worse still to the Out Patients' Department.

Advising people to eat and drink in moderation is almost certainly a waste of time, however, there are ways of minimising the awful 'day after the night before' syndrome. Drinking a few glasses of water before a party helps to dilute solutions and helps the kidneys in their work. Have a glass of water between glasses of alcohol. A glass of peppermint tea after a heavy meal not only aids digestion but helps against heartburn. Try sipping ginger tea when feeling queasy after eating too much. In fact, if you are going to several dinner dates within the space of a few days, drinking peppermint tea during the whole period would go a long way to eliminating discomfort. If a big meal is expected, eat a couple of carrots and a stick of celery before venturing out.

If a hangover is something you expect to experience on 1st January, clear Polish barszcz or borscht, (beetroot soup that is better known for its connections with Russia than being the national soup of Poland) is a most delicious cure. Usually served piping hot before going home, it means a refreshing good night's sleep and no hangover.

Milk thistle is a herb widely known for supporting the work of the liver. This organ is particularly stressed during the festive season. Whether in tablet, tincture or capsule form, milk thistle can be taken well before the festivities begin and for a few weeks after they have finished.

A hangover should be gone by late afternoon the next day. If it isn't, you probably have alcohol poisoning. A quick liver tonic may be appropriate here. Steep the following for 20 minutes: hibiscus, cloves, allspice and the juice of 2 lemons in either orange juice or grape juice. Sip this slowly and recover.

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