

DECEMBER 2025

# Through the WIRE

LOCAL 26 IBEW-NECA JOINT TRUST FUNDS

YOUR  
HEALTH CARE PLAN

*protecting your family*

## Make It a Season of Joy and Good Health

**M**aking the season bright takes work...a lot of work! Holiday ads and holiday music make it seem like the season is all twinkling lights, big red bows, and cups of cider by the fireplace. However, anyone who's ever hosted family or friends for the holidays knows that the season is also crowded grocery stores, short-fused drivers in packed parking lots and late nights spent cooking for an army. While you wouldn't have a holiday season without all of the things that make your family and friends happy, it's also important to check in on your own happiness this time of year—when seasonal pressures can impact your good health.

Stay the course in taking care of yourself this holiday season by following these five tips from the American Heart Association.



**Keep up the healthy habits you have worked hard to create and follow all year.**

Continue to do something active every day and continue to make healthy food choices, starting with a healthy breakfast to kick start your busy days. And, don't forget about striving to get at least seven hours of sleep each night.



**Don't let seasonal sugar sneak up on you.** A holiday cookie here and an extra



glass of eggnog there will add up to extra pounds you won't want to carry with you into the new year. Make a plan to have healthy snacks on hand so you aren't visiting the candy bowl when you have the urge to snack and have quick healthy meal items on hand for the days when you are short on time. When attending a holiday party offer to bring a healthy appetizer to ensure you will have something you feel good about eating.



**Make the time—even just 30 minutes—to do something active.** Exercise

increases blood circulation to the brain which helps improve mood, motivation and stress and exercise releases endorphins, known as natural feel-good chemicals, which increase feelings of pleasure and well-being. And, you don't have to run a marathon to experience the benefits of exercise. Even a brisk walk will release those endorphins and get your blood circulating. If you think you don't have time to squeeze in some exercise consider this: Exercise can clear your mind

and help you better focus on the things on your holiday to-do list.



**Build in some me-time!** Like making time for exercise, taking time for yourself during

the busy holiday season can provide some major health benefits like recharging the mind and body with relaxation and rest. So go ahead and curl up under a blanket and watch that Hallmark holiday movie. It's not an indulgence; it's good holiday medicine.



**Create a plan for the year ahead.** Feelings of sadness can come with the passing

of the holidays. With the parties over, the family gone, and decorations put away, it can feel like there's nothing to look forward to. Creating a plan for the year will give you more months, more fun to look forward to.

**Need a little more guidance to help you navigate the holiday season? Contact BHS, our employee assistance program, at 888-784-5665. Trained professionals are on staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week via a confidential phone call.**

# SIZE Matters!



**A**s you grab a large handful of pistachios from the bowl on the coffee table, do you know how many servings are actually in your palm? Probably not. And, just because it's only one piece of steak on your plate, that doesn't mean that one piece of steak is a single serving size. If you ordered it out in a restaurant, it's likely a serving size that could feed three people!

While getting more food for your dollar seems like a good deal for your wallet, it's a bad deal for your waist. You might be surprised to learn what is considered a recommended serving size. For items that come individually wrapped, it's easy to follow the serving size on the packaging but for items that aren't already packaged as single servings, it's more difficult.

Consider these guidelines:



One serving of meat or poultry is the size of the palm of your hand or a deck of cards.



One 3-ounce (84 grams) serving of fish is the size of a checkbook.



One half cup (120 mL) of ice cream is the size of a tennis ball.



One serving of cheese is the size of a pair of dice.



One half cup (80 grams) of cooked rice, pasta, or snacks such as chips or pretzels looks the size of a rounded handful, or a tennis ball.



Two tablespoons (32 grams) of peanut butter is the size of a ping-pong ball.



One cup (90 grams) of chopped raw fruits or vegetables is the size of a baseball.



One medium apple or orange is the size of a tennis ball.



One quarter cup (35 grams) of dried fruit or nuts is the size of a golf ball or small handful.



One cup (47 grams) of lettuce is four leaves (Romaine lettuce).



One medium baked potato is the size of a computer mouse.

Some other tips include:



Use measuring cups for food like cereal and pasta until you get better at judging portion sizes.



Avoid eating straight from the bag to avoid overeating.



Avoid eating while doing other activities, such as watching television or talking on the phone, to avoid mindless eating that can lead to eating too much.



Serve food on smaller plates so your plate looks fuller and more satisfying.



Fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables, such as leafy greens, and divide the other half of your plate between proteins and whole grains.



Be sure to also put portion control into practice when attending holiday luncheons and dinners.



If given the option, choose the smaller or lunch-size portion of a meal.



Order an appetizer instead of a full meal.



Share your meal with a friend, or immediately box half of your meal in a to-go container and give yourself a meal for another day.



Fill up on lower-calorie foods, such as a salad, before diving into a calorie-heavy main course.

You can enjoy all of your favorite foods without the guilt when you enjoy in moderation!



SCAN this QR code to access all of the valuable links mentioned in this issue of *Through the Wire*.

**Virta Health can help you stay on course with a healthy lifestyle during the holiday season and all year round. To learn more about Virta and enroll in this EWTF benefit at no additional cost, visit [www.virtahealth.com/join?employer\\_id=ewtf](http://www.virtahealth.com/join?employer_id=ewtf).**

## Recipe: LOW CARB RED VELVET CAKE: You Can Have Your Cake and Eat It Too!

Think holiday desserts can't be healthy? Virta, our partner provider in diabetes management, might just change your mind with this festive holiday cake.

### Ingredients

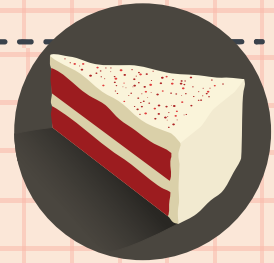
- 1¼ cup almond flour
- 2 tablespoons almond flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- ½ cup xylitol
- 2 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 2½ tablespoon whey protein powder (unsweetened)
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 3 tablespoons butter (melted)
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon white vinegar
- 1½ tablespoon red food coloring

### Icing:

- 8 oz cream cheese (softened)
- 3 tablespoons butter (softened)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 tablespoons Swerve Powdered/Confectioner's Sugar  
(Or grind xylitol into powdered form)
- ¼ teaspoon liquid stevia
- 1 cup pecan (chopped optional)

### Cooking

- Heat oven to 325 degrees F and line an 8" or 9" round pan with parchment paper. Coat with oil, butter, or cooking spray.
- Mix the dry ingredients (almond flour, baking soda, xylitol, cocoa powder, whey protein powder) until combined.
- In a separate bowl, mix the wet ingredients (buttermilk, melted butter, egg, vanilla, white vinegar, red food coloring) until incorporated.
- Combine wet ingredients with the dry ingredients. Stir until ingredients are incorporated and there are no lumps. Batter will be thick.
- Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 25 minutes. Let cool.
- While the cake is baking, combine the icing ingredients in a mixing bowl or stand mixer. Beat until creamy.
- Once cake is cooked, run a knife along the outer edge of the cake. Flip onto a serving tray and cover top and sides with icing. Sprinkle with chopped pecans, if desired.



## KIDS' CORNER



## FIND THE DIFFERENCES

The gingerbread man is smiling on both the left and the right, but the pictures have seven differences there in plain sight! Can you spot what's changed with your eagle eye in the two photos of this cute holiday guy?

1. The color of candy cane stripe is different.
2. One button is missing.
3. The cloud over the sun has disappeared.
4. The shape of the snow flake changed on the tree behind the candy cane.
5. There is an additional fir tree in the upper left corner.
6. A tree branch is missing in the snow next to the gingerbread man on the right side.
7. There is an extra leaf on the plant in bottom right corner.

ANSWERS:



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## YOUR INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNT PLAN

*growing your assets*

# A “Good Deal” May Not Really Be a Good Deal

During the holiday season, it's easy to get carried away spending more money than you otherwise would on gifts, experiences, and big-ticket items. There's something about holiday decorations and colorful ads that make us want to pull our credit cards out and spend away. But, just like with those decorations and advertisements, don't fall victim to “deals” that might sound good in the moment but come back to haunt you in the new year.

Store credit cards are one of those “sounds good in the moment” kind of offers that are often too good to be true. Store credit cards lure customers in with promises of a significant discount on an initial purchase, which can be significant if you are making a big purchase such as a TV, but along with a significant discount comes an even bigger interest rate if you do not pay your statement in full. Stores are not in the business of losing money, so they are willing to give a discount knowing that most people will not pay their bill in its entirety and will end up paying the 20 percent (or higher) interest rate for many months to come. Opening a new credit card can also affect your



credit score so that store credit card with a discount off your first purchase could hinder your ability to get a loan for perhaps a new car in the coming year.

Also, beware of the “buy now, pay later” sales pitch. There is really no deal here; just the option to delay paying for your item. However, like a credit card, if you miss a payment, you will incur fees and damage your credit score. If you cannot afford to pay for your item, you may want to rethink your decision to purchase the item at all.