

Fatty New Year after stuffing at Christmas



HEALTH STEPHANIE BEDO
bedos@goldcoast.com.au
twitter.com/GCBedo

TUCKING into a standard Christmas dinner will add as much as 125g of fat to your waistline if you're not careful this silly season.

With festive food shopping amping up along the supermarket shelves, health experts are warning how to handle the annual fat-laden day wisely.

A baked dinner – complete with Christmas pudding with ice cream and custard, five scorched almonds, a handful of chocolate-coated nuts and one piece of Chrissy cake – can send your fat count up by as much as 125g.

And don't even add a mince pie to the equation – they contain 250 calories and at least 10g of fat per pie.

According to Nutrition Australia, Australians gain on average between 0.8 and 1.5kg over the Christmas period.

Low-fat cookbook author and weight loss expert Annette Sym said holiday nibbles were the problem for most.

The key to avoiding excessive weight gain over Christmas was moderation and being aware of what you were put-

ting in your mouth.

"Think about how many times you walk past the nibbles and grab a handful of this or that – it can really add up over the day," she said.

The Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health warns that a standard drink is 10g of alcohol, which equates to 100ml wine – much less than what a person would pour for themselves.

Cocktails or punches at parties also have a higher alcoholic content, coupled with added kilojoules from fruit juices and other ingredients.

Ms Sym said Christmas was one of the most challenging times for people who were watching their weight.

"I'm not just talking about Christmas Day, but the next few weeks leading up to the festive period – the parties, the extra food and drinks, and the never-ending supply of Christmas treats all over the supermarket," she said.

"It all adds up to temptation, temptation, temptation."

Australia's leading scientist in the

field of glycemic index research, Dr Alan Barclay, said people did not have to forsake all of their Christmas favourites to avoid the battle of the bulge.

Dr Barclay, who is also head of research at the Australian Diabetes Council, said simply swapping rich and fatty high GI foods for healthy low GI alternatives would ease the fatty load.

The Glycemic Index is a dietary tool that differentiates between various carbohydrate foods and how our bodies use them.

Research has shown people who eat too many high GI foods and not enough low ones are at risk of developing significant health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

"You can have your turkey, potatoes and trifle, but by making small, simple modifications, you can lower the GI of your festive dinner," he said.

"By doing this you will be eating the healthiest foods for your body and this will help prevent weight gain in the process."