



PARTY – SEASON SURVIVAL KIT

Lashings of booze, late nights and rich food can make December a long month. IMI's founding director and naturopath *Dr Graeme Bradshaw* reveals what gets him through the festivities

Being mindful and reducing our consumption of rich foods and alcoholic drinks is of course advisable, and yet, most of us indulge more than usual in the weeks leading up to Christmas. The reality is you're probably not going to change your 'work hard, play hard' lifestyle any time soon, so here are some practical remedies to help you eliminate toxins as you party on!

The trick is to support your liver to eliminate those extra toxins from your system... faster, so you can reduce the effect of hangovers, weight gain and stress. Essentially you can detox as you go by making wise alcohol choices, and introducing nutrients and supplements to your daily routine.

Make wise alcohol choices

When we drink alcohol, our blood sugar levels soar then sink. This can lead to inflammation, causing hangovers. But it's important to remember that some drinks are 'better' for you than others. Stick to

low-sugar spirits, such as tequila, scotch or vodka, and drink them with a non-sugary mixer and lemon or lime. With wine, red is your best choice because it's lower in sugar than white or sparkling.

Most hangover symptoms are from dehydration. The tip here is to alternate your drinks with a glass of water to stay hydrated. You'll be glad you did! Nominate several alcohol-free days each week, and aim to stick to three or less drinks at any one time. Four drinks and more is damaging to health, whereas one or two are beneficial, three are neutral.

If there's extra alcohol to process, take Liver Support – a potent clinical-grade formula containing milk thistle and other effective herbs that give your liver a boost. Take two or three capsules before you go out (it works best if taken prior to alcohol) or at bedtime, and say goodbye to hangovers.

Ola Loa is not only an easy-to-take rehydrating vitamin C drink, but also a stronger detox version than the popular Berocca or ▶



Emergen C. It provides active vitamin B, vitamin D, magnesium and zinc, along with electrolytes and 1,000mg vitamin C. Your liver needs all these nutrients to detoxify alcohol, reduce stress and boost your immune system. It's good to take before, during or after a party – drink it before and it gives you an energy boost too!

Be kind to your stomach

To manage your intake of rich food at parties, be sure to combine all the high-calorie carbs and fats with plenty of veggies, whether cooked or as dips. If you're drinking alcohol, your sugar intake will already be high, so skip dessert or limit yourself to a spoonful or two – you'll find this is all you need.

Nux Vomica 30 is a popular homeopathic remedy for partying. It helps relieve the digestive stress and acidity caused by too much rich food and alcohol. You can take it hourly to ease an upset stomach and hangover.

Survive holiday stress

Holiday stress is not uncommon. The array of demands if you are travelling – long-haul flights, traffic jams and over-tired children – can be exhausting. Even if you are staying home, the pressure of last-minute shopping, food preparation, family dinners and social obligations can be overwhelming.

The key to dealing with holiday stress is to keep your expectations balanced and don't try to do too much. Pay attention to signs of tension, and to your stress levels, and take a short break when you need one. Natural supplements can also help support your system to cope with stress, while restoring vitality. Here are my top three:

1 Stress-Relax Serenity Formula. The potent adaptogenic herbs in this formula include *Rhodiola rosea*, *ashwagandha* and *Siberian ginseng*, which help restore and rejuvenate the body's stress-coping systems. The lavender provides a calming effect.

2 Lavela WS 1265. This is an encapsulated lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) essential oil indicated for occasional anxiety; it has been shown to promote relaxation and calm nervousness with safety and efficacy.

3 Stress-Relax Serenity Response. Based on *ashwagandha* extract and *Siberian ginseng*, this herbal supplement promotes vitality during

the day and supports normal sleep at night, making you feel calmer and yet more energised.

Resolve to detox

More people sign up for a detox in January than at any other time of the year. From the onset, it's important to recognise that the lifestyle implications of a poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, lack of sleep, and alcohol- or drug-use cannot simply be flushed or purged away. But a detox can help cleanse your body and allow you to jump-start a healthier lifestyle.

Advocates for detox typically describe the liver and kidney as acting like filters – toxins are physically captured and some are retained. These organs need to be cleaned out periodically, like you'd rinse out a sponge, or change the air filter in your car. But not all detox programmes are created equal. The key to an effective detox is to up-regulate the liver function, and this takes specific amino acids that help to bind and release pollutants and other toxins, while also speeding up elimination from the gut and bowel.

Conveniently, there is no shortage of detox solutions to absolve you of your sins, while overhauling your body and soul for 2018. Be sure to opt for a guided programme. Happy cleansing! 🌿

Go-to supplements for a fast fix

- **Ola Loa** – mix with water and drink up to three glasses a day to rehydrate and detoxify
- **Liver Support** – take two or three capsules before you go out to help your body process excess alcohol
- **Stress-Relax Serenity Response** – take two tablets twice daily to keep you feeling calm and yet uplifted

To make these tips practical, you can find the recommended supplements at the Integrated Medicine Institute (IMI) in Discovery Bay or Central. IMI also offers a 10-Day Detox Programme that you can do without taking time off work. For more information, visit www.imi.com.hk.