

Jingle Bowels? More than a third of Brits suffer from abdominal complaints during the festive season

Submitted by: Virgo Health Ltd

Friday, 21 December 2012

Over a third of people in the UK (17 million) have suffered from 'jingle bowels' – stomach complaints including painful abdominal cramps, indigestion, constipation, diarrhoea, bloating and wind due to overindulgence during the festive season.

According to a survey by Buscopan Cramps the majority of Brits (94%) admit to eating more food than usual during the Christmas week – more than any other time of year. 1 It's not just food that can bring on a bout of 'jingle bowels', increased stress levels can also raise the risk of suffering from abdominal discomfort during the festive season. In fact a quarter of us feel stressed at the thought of a visit from the in-laws, with last minute Christmas shopping and the strain from long supermarket queues causing anxiety for nearly 40% of us.

Professor Peter Whorwell, Professor of Medicine and Gastroenterology at Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester comments, "With preparation for the Christmas season seemingly starting earlier and lasting longer each year it's hardly surprising bowel complaints are heightened during this period. While consuming increased amounts of foods and drinks that you wouldn't normally can cause unwanted bowel problems, many don't realise that stress can also trigger painful abdominal cramps as a result of the close connection between the brain and the gut. Often long term relentless stress, such as financial concerns about the cost of Christmas or the stress of family descending, can be more harmful and impact on your health so it is important people who are prone to stress address the cause(s)."

Prone to jingle bowels? Check out our tips below:

- Party season drinkies: What's your favourite Christmas tippie? Those who prefer diet drinks should be aware that they may contain sorbitol (a common sweetener) which can cause bloating and problems in those with sensitive stomachs. Avoid where possible and alternate alcoholic drinks with water to avoid dehydration
- Festive food swaps: It's difficult to avoid the foods you love during the festive season even if you know they cause you discomfort. However, below are some easy food swaps that won't compromise the taste too much and are less likely to bring on abdominal cramps:
 - Roast potatoes in olive oil rather than goose fat
 - Swap full fat ice cream for crème fraiche
 - Swap brussels sprouts for carrots
- Avoid a final flap: Reduce last minute stress by planning ahead and ordering food and presents online
- Treat the source of the pain: If festive food and stress bring on a bout of abdominal cramps, you can relieve pain and discomfort with an antispasmodic such as Buscopan Cramps which works directly on the cause of pain, the spasm in the stomach, to provide effective and targeted relief.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

For further information please contact Virgo Consumer HEALTH:
Phyllida Price on 020 8939 1273 / Phyllida.Price@virgohealth.com

www.stomachcramps.co.uk is an informative online resource for those interested in understanding more about abdominal cramps and discovering practical lifestyle advice and treatment solutions.

Buscopan Cramps:

- Buscopan Cramps is an antispasmodic medicine which is specifically designed to treat the cause of abdominal cramps, the spasm, to relieve pain and discomfort
- For optimum relief it is recommended Buscopan Cramps is taken at the onset of symptoms
- Adults and children (12 years and over) can take two tablets up to four times a day if required
- Buscopan Cramps is only available from behind the pharmacy counter, RRP £4.48
- Contains hyoscine butylbromide. Always read the label

About the survey:

A total of 3000 people in the UK participated in the survey conducted by 72 Point, which took place in May 2010.

References:

- 1.Data on File: BUS10-03. 3000 respondents. May 2010