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## Holiday Gift Ideas for the Family Caregiver



Caregiving does not stop during the holiday season. Often it can become even more stressful with the added demands, expectations and emotions associated with this time of year. When it comes to gift giving, rather than simply buying another “thing” for the family and friend caregivers in your life – focus on gifts that will help reduce the demands of caregiving and allow the caregiver to get time away with an opportunity to enjoy and replenish themselves. Some of the following gift ideas will have a monetary price and others will simply mean giving your time and energy. Give the gift of:

**Respite:** Arrange to stay with the care recipient while the caregiver takes some time to do something for themselves – whether inside the home or elsewhere. Or give them a gift certificate from a home support agency so they can arrange to have a home support worker come in and supply respite. Also, most private residential care facilities have respite beds available for a fee for a few days or a few weeks.

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## Cutting the Salt in Your Diet

Want to prevent heart disease, high blood pressure and more? Cut the salt. According to a recent article in the New England Journal of Medicine, excess salt in the American diet contributes to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and heart attacks. Eliminating three grams of salt from our diets would do as much or more to reduce our risk of suffering from these diseases as reducing tobacco use, obesity and cholesterol.

Everyone needs salt. Without it we could not keep fluid inside our blood cells or transmit signals from our brains to our nerves and muscles.

Since salt, or sodium chloride, cannot be made by the body, we have to get it from our diet. The US Departments of Agriculture and Human Services have recommended that about four grams of salt is all we need.

Most natural foods contain salt, so eating a healthy diet will give you enough. You certainly want to cut back on the salt you add at the table or during food preparation, but you need to do more if you want to reduce your intake by three grams. That's because most of our salt is already in the foods we buy. Here is what you need to know about processed foods:

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## Holiday Gift Ideas for the Family Caregiver

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**Freedom from chores:** Often the regular household chores and daily errands get pushed aside by the more essential requirements of caregiving. Either arrange to do some of the household chores yourself or purchase a gift certificate for a service that will take care of some of these daily demands such as cooking, house cleaning, grocery shopping or gardening.

**Fun and laughter:** Take the caregiver out for a meal, to a play or a holiday event. Arrange for the care recipient to be cared for while the caregiver is out. Or bring fun to their home – bring dinner in, rent a funny video, play cards or have a games night. Include the person receiving care as well if appropriate. This can give both people an opportunity to participate in an activity that is not focused on caregiving.

**Relaxation:** Treat the caregiver to a pedicure, massage or other relaxing experiences with a gift certificate. If finances are a concern, ask family members and friends to chip in.

**Appreciation:** Acknowledge the caregiver's hard work with verbal appreciation or a thank you card. Recognition of their time and effort is often enough to make a caregiver feel appreciated. Taking time to show your gratitude to the family caregivers in your life can help them stay strong, healthy and better able to caregive for as long as is needed.

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## Cutting the Salt in Your Diet

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Sodium is added to processed foods for flavor and as a preservative. You must read the Nutrition Facts label on all your packaged foods to check the salt content. Watch out for high sodium in foods like tomato sauce, soups, canned goods, lunch meats and condiments. The best processed foods are those labeled "sodium-free." Sodium free means less than five milligrams of sodium per serving. The term "reduced sodium" means that the salt content has been reduced by only 25 percent.

Here are some salt-saving suggestions:

- Choose fresh or frozen food over canned whenever possible.
- Eliminate salty snacks.
- Buy unsalted or sodium-free foods.
- Use salt substitutes like herbs, pepper or lemon juice.
- Do not be fooled by sea salt. It has the same amount of sodium chloride as the regular variety.

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## Did You Know?

### Dance for Good Health

Dancing is a great workout for the mind and body. A 150-pound adult can burn about 150 calories doing 30 minutes of moderate social dancing. And by concentrating on your dance steps, you'll boost brain power by improving memory skills. Dancing builds confidence, reduces stress and tension and provides the social opportunity to meet others.

Dancing can be quite a workout – just watch the reality television show *Dancing With The Stars* to see the physiques and fitness levels dancers can obtain. If you are less fit, you can vary the level of physical exertion.

Dancing improves agility, balance and coordination. Its multidirectional movements benefit joint mobility and it's a weight-bearing activity that helps thicken bone density. Dancing can be a mild aerobic workout with the more aggressive dance styles offering excellent cardiovascular benefits. It helps people of all ages and physical abilities get and stay in shape.

In a recent study reported in the *Journal of Aging & Physical Activity* (July 2013), 40 people in their sixties participated in a dance program twice a week for 12 weeks. At the study's end, all participants experienced significant health benefits, including lower levels of depression and disability limitations, and marked increases in physical function.

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There are many types of dance to explore, from creative ballet to fast-paced Scottish Country Dancing, which is a great aerobic workout. There's rumba, foxtrot, tango, aerobic dance, square dancing, swing, line dancing, folk (or ethnic) dancing, salsa, flamenco, jazz, hip hop, tap, modern, clogging, and even belly dancing, to name just a few. Ballroom dance is another rigorous activity that uses the larger muscle groups. It's even a recognized Olympic sport, and may possibly become a medal sport in the Olympic Games.

You can find dance classes at dance schools, health clubs, community recreation centres, YMCAs and even some churches. Also, consider doing your own thing by putting on some music or checking out a dance video on YouTube and dancing around the house. And don't forget the evening hot spots with a good dance band!

Article by Eve Lees, Reprinted with Permission from Senior Living Magazine, [www.seniorlivingmag.com](http://www.seniorlivingmag.com)

### **Chili Rubbed Pork Tenderloin and Sweet Potatoes**

Tuck this one-pan meal into the oven, and you'll have time to prepare a salad and set the table. Roasting an extra tenderloin gives you the make ahead for our delicious [Pork tenderloin and bean stew](http://www.heartandstrokefoundation.com) (go to [www.heartandstrokefoundation.com](http://www.heartandstrokefoundation.com) to get this recipe). Makes 6-8 servings.

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## Chili Rubbed Pork Tenderloin and Sweet Potatoes

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### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup (50 mL) orange juice
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) chili powder
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) dried oregano leaves
- 2 tsp (10 mL) Dijon mustard
- 2 cloves garlic, rasped or pureed
- 3 pork tenderloins, about 2 1/2 lb/1.25 kg total
- 2 sweet potatoes (about 1 1/2 lb/750 g), peeled and sliced
- 1 onion, sliced
- 8 oz (227 g) green beans, trimmed
- 1 cup (250 mL) sodium reduced chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) fresh ground pepper

### Directions

- In a large bowl, stir together orange juice, chili powder, oregano, mustard and garlic. Add pork tenderloins and rub paste all over; set aside.
- Lay potatoes and onions in a roasting pan and sprinkle beans over top. Drizzle broth and vinegar over top and sprinkle with parsley and pepper. Place pork tenderloins on top.
- Roast in preheated 400 F (200 C) oven for about 40 minutes or until pork tenderloin reaches 155 F (68 C) and vegetables are tender crisp.
- Remove 1 tenderloin and reserve for Pork tenderloin and bean stew.
- Thinly slice remaining tenderloins and serve with vegetables.

Nutritional Information Per Serving-Calories 296, Protein 33 g, Total Fat 6 g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 71 mg, Carbohydrates 26 g, Fibre 5 g, Sodium 227 mg, Potassium 911 mg

Recipe developed by Emily Richards, PH Ec.  
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### **Quote of the Month**

"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

*Michael Jordan*