



## Holiday Health

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The holidays can be a wonderful time — full of fun, happiness, and cheer. Even though the overall feel of the holidays can be one of joy, there are still obstacles and challenges that we all face at this time of year.

I'm sure we've all had the experience of the family that stays just "a little too long," or the weight loss promises we just can't seem to keep. For others, this time of year provides more difficult challenges, such as coping with the loss of a loved one.

The purpose of this month's newsletter is to provide you with some tips and strategies to help you cope with any stressors or challenges so that you can have the most enjoyable holiday possible.

My wish for you is that you have a safe and happy holiday—one that is filled with family, friends, relaxation, and most of all... FUN!! Enjoy your break and I'll see you "next year."

### Weight Control

The holidays can be filled with temptations when it comes to food! You know the favorites — pecan pie, egg nog, party appetizers, etc. Don't let this time of celebration turn into a feeding frenzy! You'll just feel bad about yourself, which will put a damper on your holiday cheer. Follow these tips for a healthier holiday:

- Continue to exercise—even if it's just for a few minutes. It all adds up!
- Don't pass up your favorites— you don't want to feel deprived. Enjoy your favorite foods—in moderation.
- Remember, they are holiDAYS not holiWEEKS or MONTHS. Don't overeat every day of the season.
- Drop the "all or nothing" attitude—don't think "I've messed up this morning, I might as well blow it the rest of the day." This leads to MANY extra (and unwanted) calories.



- Choose healthier options when possible. Substitute when cooking and make "better" choices when you're able.
- Eat before going to parties—Have a nutritious snack before heading to the buffet. You can still eat your favorite foods, you're just likely to eat less of them.
- Continue to eat your veggies—They are full of fiber and will help fill you up. Remember to aim for 5 a day!

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*Use the tips in this newsletter to help make your holiday season happy, bright, and rewarding!*

### Print This!

[Click here to look at this letter in a printable version. This is useful if you would like to print a copy for yourself or for a friend!](#)

## Stress and the Blues

### Stress

Although the holidays can be fun, they can also be filled with stress — last minute shopping, having guests, and pressure to succeed can all be contributing factors. Follow these tips to help control stress during the season:

- **Get plenty of sleep**—the less sleep we have, the more likely we are to respond negatively to slight stressors.
- **Prioritize**—Write a list of what you need to do. Write numbers next to each task (1=utmost importance/have to do, 2=needs to be done, but not right away, 3 = would like to get done). Start working on your #1's, then twos. If you have time, tackle the threes.
- **Delegate**—No one says we have to be Martha Stewart! Enlist help, even if you're not sure if you need it. Make a "honey-do" list for your husband or kids and ask Aunt Bertha to bring a side dish to dinner.
- **Set limits**—when people visit, it can cause stress on the typical family routine. Make arrangements in advance for shorter visits (when possible). Try not to solve past problems during the holidays.
- **Stick to a budget**—money can be a source of stress. Plan a budget and stick to it!
- **Think positive**—When things start feeling out of control, it's easy to slip into a negative thinking pattern. When this happens, it can snowball until you're thinking more negative thoughts than positive ones. If you notice yourself engaging in negative thinking, acknowledge it and try to find the positive in the situation.
- **Be thankful**—Make a list of all you are thankful for. You'll be amazed as you watch your list grow. This can be a great family tradition as well.



*How can you tell between normal stress and "the blues"?*

### The Blues

There can be a fine line between difficulty managing stress and depression. Depression is more serious and can affect your life negatively. Signs to look for include: irritability, change in sleep patterns, weight loss or gain, feelings of guilt, loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy, difficulty concentrating, feelings of hopelessness.

If you experience several of these symptoms, please seek help. Your physician is a good place to start. He or she can make a referral to someone who specializes in "the blues" or depression, as well as refer you to a person who accepts your insurance.

## Family

The holiday season is the perfect time to enjoy family! Whether it's your own children or out of town guests, here are some tips to make family time become quality time:

- **Reconnect**—Take this time to enjoy your kids! Spend at least 15 minutes of uninterrupted time with them each day.
- **Involve them**—Involve the kids with decorating and cooking. You are bound to make memories that will last a lifetime!



- **Be assertive**—When family and guests come to town be sure to lay the ground rules up front. If you are feeling overwhelmed by obligations, decide which are the most important and say "no" to the others.



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- **Take breaks**—Remember to take time for yourself. Whether you read a book or take a bubble bath, take time to reconnect with yourself.

#### Learn More

[Learn about holiday health tips from nurses.](#)

[Find out more information about self care throughout the holiday season.](#)

#### Wrap Up

For many, the holidays can be busy and sometimes stressful. It doesn't have to be that way. Use some of the tips above to create a fun and relaxing environment in your home. Take time for family, friends, and also yourself. Take time to relax and don't let your holiday calendar become “overbooked.” Remember that you can't be everything to everyone. Prioritize and tackle the most important tasks first!

I hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday break!!

This newsletter was created by your School Psychologist, Terri Sisson. If you have any questions or would like more information, click [here](#) or call the School Board Office at 948-3780.







