

Doctor's Bag



Have a Stress-Free, Happy Holiday Season

The holidays should be a time of joy and peace but for some of us, they are a time of stress and overcommitment. Here are some ideas for coping with holiday stress.

Be realistic. The "perfect" holiday season has little to do with decorations, gifts, social events and shopping. Accept that you cannot do or be everything to everyone. Take a deep breath and enjoy the moment.

Learn to say no. You do not have to attend every holiday function you're invited to – and neither do your kids. If you find yourself planning to attend two or more events in one day, pace yourself and pick just one. Holiday gatherings will be more enjoyable if you can just relax and have a good time.

Don't overspend. Money is one of the top stressors during the holidays. Set a budget for gifts, decorations, food and other holiday expenses and stick to it.

Seek professional help. If you find that you are unable to cope with the holiday madness, it's okay to ask for help. Start with your personal physician – he or she can help you develop healthy coping mechanisms or provide a referral to a behavioral health specialist.

From all of us to all of you – have a healthy, peaceful, joyous holiday season!

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

Holiday Health and Safety Tips From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The holidays are a time to celebrate, give thanks and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health. Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips.



Wash your hands often. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds.

Stay warm. Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing.

Manage stress. The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health. Keep a check on over-commitment and over-spending. Balance work, home and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook.

Travel Safely. Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink

and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Avoid using your cell phone and do not text while driving. Wear a seat belt and always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to his or her height.

Be smoke-free. Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, quit today!

Watch the kids. Children are at high risk for injuries that can lead to death or disability. Keep a watchful eye on your kids when they're eating and playing. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards (like coins and hard candy) and other objects out of kids' reach.

Prevent injuries. Injuries can occur anywhere and some often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations. Most residential fires occur during winter. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves or candles unattended. Don't use generators, grills or other gasoline- or charcoal-burning devices inside your home or garage. Test your smoke detectors once a month and replace batteries twice a year.

Handle and prepare food safely. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

Eat healthy and be active. With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy. Select just one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to your favorite holiday music. Be active for at least two and a half hours a week. Help kids and teens be active for at least one hour a day.