



Holiday Hints

Holidays are intended to be times of joy, celebration, thanksgiving and reflection. Families and friends gather to celebrate and reminisce, while children wait with anticipation the treats that will surely appear.

While the holidays are a time to celebrate, they can also be stressful. Party planning, gift-giving, event attending and normal pressures of everyday life can take a toll during the holiday season. While the holiday preparations are part of the fun, it is important to take time to be well, be safe and enjoy the time spent with family and friends.

This year, during the busy holiday season, take time to pay special attention to your health and the wellness of those around you. Giving the gift of health and safety is one that is good to pass on to others.

The Center for Disease Control offers some tips for this holiday season to keep you safe, healthy and focused on enjoying the celebrations to come:

Wash Your Hands Often

Keeping hands clean is one of the most effective tools you can use to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Use soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds. If you are out and about and washing your hands is not practical, rely upon an alcohol-based hand sanitizer product.

Stay Warm and Dry

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

Manage Stress

While the holidays can be an emotional drain, they do not need to take a toll on your health. Keep an eye on over committing and over-spending. Try to find a balance between work, home and play. Rely upon family and friends for support, understanding and encouragement. Practice good time management techniques, and try your best to keep a relaxed and positive outlook.

Travel Safely

For lots of folks, holiday celebrations mean time on the road. Remember to always use safety belts and child restraint seats appropriately every time you are in the car. Do not drink and drive or allow someone else to drink and drive. Plan travel routes well in advance, and follow speed limits.

Be Smoke-free

Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, this is a great time to quit, so talk to your doctor or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to get started.

Get Check-ups and Vaccinations

Regular check-ups and exams help detect problems before they start or get you started on a track for treatment before small problems become large ones. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Get your annual checkups before the holidays.

Watch the Kids

Little ones are at an increased risk for serious injuries. Keep a watchful eye on kids while they are eating and playing. Kids are amazingly quick and inventive, so make sure they are playing with toys appropriately. Keep potential choke hazards out of children's reach, and learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking.

Prevent Injuries

Injuries from falls and fireworks often occur around the holidays. Use step stools and sturdy ladders for hanging decorations. Be careful with candles, trees and fireplaces. Also, check light strands carefully before decorating a tree or other areas of the home.

Handle and Prepare Food Safely

Food-related illnesses are no fun, especially during the holidays. Keep your family and friends safe by washing hands and work surfaces frequently. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods. Cook foods to proper temperatures. Refrigerate foods promptly and 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 fruits instead of candy. Find fun ways to stay active such as dancing to your favorite holiday music. Make sure you are active for at least 2.5 hours each week. Make sure kids get at least one hour of activity each day.

These suggestions by the Center for Disease Control can be viewed in greater detail by visiting www.cdc.gov/family/holiday.

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