

The Holiday Season Can Be Very Stressful Time of Year!

Here are just a few reasons why the holidays can cause unhealthy stress in our lives.

- * Regular schedules may become disrupted because of decorating, shopping and entertaining, leaving people short on time and feeling rushed.
- * The holiday season can cause many people to feel lonely or depressed, which can be very stressful.
- * Time pressures can disrupt eating, sleeping and exercising habits, so our bodies become more vulnerable to stress.
- * Extra financial pressures and not being able to afford the gifts you would like to give can also cause stress.
- * The holiday season is usually spent with family members, which may increase stress for some people.
- * People with a chronic illness may feel stressed because others would like them to feel joyous during the holiday season. But, just like any other time of the year, they do not feel well and find it hard to celebrate.
- * Many people experience emotional disappointment during the holidays because things did not go as they had planned. This can also contribute to unhealthy stress.

Tips to Avoid Holiday Stress

- * Don't try to do too much - one person can only do so much in a certain time with given financial resources.
- * If you are feeling lonely, join others in volunteering to do something for those in need. You will find company and feel good about yourself for helping others.
- * Continue your exercise program, get plenty of rest and eat healthful foods. If you have children, make sure they do the same. You will be happier, more energetic and better prepared to take on stressful holiday activities such as shopping, running extra errands and entertaining.
- * Try not to have too many expectations for the holiday season. Each holiday is different and you can enjoy each in its own way.
- * Don't be afraid to do less than you planned or less than you did last year. The stress caused by trying to do these things can ruin the holidays for yourself and the people around you.
- * Don't drink too much alcohol. Excessive drinking will not help you deal with unhealthy stress.
- * Make time in the day for yourself. Give yourself room to enjoy a relaxing activity such as taking a warm bath, listening to music, taking a walk, or even taking some deep breaths. Other relaxation methods include meditation, progressive muscle relaxation and visualization. Pick activities that you find relaxing and try to do something everyday to help you unwind.
- * Try to be more forgiving and tolerant. Many people around you may be feeling just as pressured as you do, or even more. Try to be understanding of other people's mistakes or carelessness. Your kindness will help both you and others feel less stressed.
- * Don't forget to enjoy the sights and sounds of the holiday!

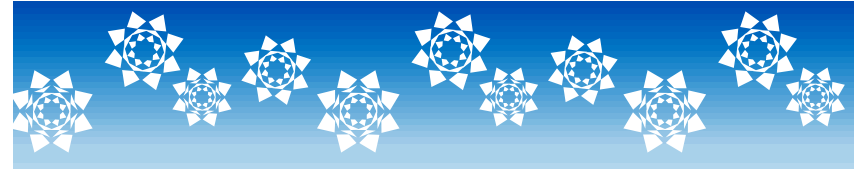


Symptoms of Stress

There are many different symptoms of stress that vary from person to person, but here are a few that may affect you during the holiday season.

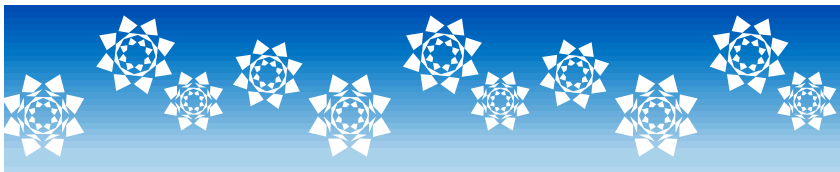
- * Aggressive Driving
- * Depression
- * Difficulty Sleeping
- * Excessive Drinking
- * Fatigue
- * Headaches
- * Irritability
- * Low Self-Esteem
- * Overeating
- * Upset Stomach

It's normal to feel a little stressed, unhappy or frustrated during the holiday time of year, but if you feel overwhelmed, do not be afraid to ask for help.



HAPPIER HOLIDAYS!

Managing Stress During
the Holiday Season



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