Holiday Stress: Tips on How to Manage

During the holidays, one may feel pressure coming from many different directions. The holidays can be very demanding and overwhelming at times. Sources of holiday stress might include parties, shopping, baking, cleaning, and entertaining. The holidays tend to sneak up all at once, and many may feel unprepared. The to-do lists grow quickly around the holiday season, often consuming an individual’s time and energy. The holiday season should be a time full of excitement and promise, but this frequently is not the case. One reason holiday stress can be so overwhelming is due to the fact that people often set unrealistic or high expectations.

In small doses, stress actually can be beneficial. Stress affects different people in different ways. Stress can cause various symptoms in the body. Around the holidays, one may recognize physical signs of stress including abdominal pain, headaches, muscle tightness or pain, and fatigue. Also, stress can result in emotional or cognitive symptoms, such as irritability and lessened attention span. Recognizing symptoms of being “over-stressed” is important in health promotion. Sources of stress during the holidays include too much to do in too little time, unaffordable, different expectations, family issues, loneliness, crowds, too many parties, exhaustion, no accomplishments in the past year, or just simply too much.

Helpful tips for coping with holiday stress: Acknowledge and express your feelings, reach out to religious or other social events, be realistic, set aside differences, stick to a budget, plan ahead, learn to say no, don’t abandon healthy habits, take a breather, and seek professional help if you need it. During the holidays, you should also think about what the holiday season means to you. Remember to take control in regard to gift giving, entertaining, family get-togethers, time management, and taking care of yourself. Recognizing and coping with holiday depression is important as well.

The Holiday Blues

The holiday blues may be a result of unresolved family issues, high or unrealistic expectations, loss of a loved one, isolation, losses or disappointments over the past years, familial changes (i.e. divorce), or alcohol.

Combating the holiday blues: Do something different! Take a vacation with a family member or friend, spend time with people who care about you, reach out to others in need, attend a religious or community gathering, reflect on your losses and express feelings of sadness, appreciate things that you do have, stay active, get help if you need it, and make plans for after the New Year.

Managing Stress through the Four A’s

Avoid: Set limits and say no, take control of your environment, and eliminate tasks that you cannot afford to take on.
Alter: Express feelings and emotions, be flexible, be assertive, and implement good time management skills.
Adapt: Use reframing to look at the problem from a different perspective, look at the whole picture, set expectations at a realistic level, and stay positive about the situation.
Accept: Realize what you can and cannot control, look at the positive side, express feelings and emotions once again, and forgive for the imperfections in this imperfect world.

Again, remember to have time for fun and relaxation. Do something enjoyable to you every day. Do not forget to have a sense of humor! Healthy ways of relaxing are walking, spending time with friends or family, exercising, journaling, bathing, playing with pets, getting a massage, reading a good book, listening to music, and laughing. Adopt a healthy lifestyle!

http://www.mayoclinic.com/
**Facts about Stress**

- Stress has been called “the silent killer” and can lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pain, and an irregular heartbeat.
- The stress hormone cortisol not only causes abdominal fat to accumulate, but it also enlarges individual fat cells, leading to what researchers call “diseased” fat.
- Stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, liver cirrhosis, and suicide.
- Chronic stress can impair the developmental growth in children by lowering the production of growth hormone from the pituitary gland.
- Stress can result in more headaches as a result of the body rerouting blood flow to other parts of the body.
- Laughing lowers stress hormones (like cortisol, epinephrine, and adrenaline) and strengthens the immune system by releasing health-enhancing hormones.


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**The Pantry**

The Center for Health Promotion is housing a pantry to assist those in the campus community who may need assistance with food and basic need items. The CHP is in need of non-perishable food, items as well as health/and beauty items to stock The Pantry before the beginning of fall semester. Please consider making a donation. Donated items can be brought to the CHP office (Hayes 004) from 9am-5pm, Monday through Friday.

Specific items needed include:
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned meat
- Boxed dinners
- Juice
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Laundry soap and cleaning supplies
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Body Wash
- Toothpaste
- Hand soap

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**Apple salad with figs and almonds**

Serves 6  
Serving size: About 3/4 cup

Calories: 89  
Sodium: 38 mg

Total fat: 1 g  
Total carbohydrate: 18 g

Saturated fat: trace  
Dietary fiber: 3 g

Trans fat: 0 g  
Sugars: 3 g

Monounsaturated fat: 1 g  
Protein: 2 g

Cholesterol: trace

**Ingredients**

- 2 large red apples, cored and diced
- 6 dried figs, chopped
- 2 ribs of celery, diced
- 1/2 cup fat-free lemon yogurt
- 2 tablespoons slivered almonds
- 2 carrots, peeled and grated

**Directions**

In a small bowl, combine apples, figs and celery. Add yogurt and mix thoroughly. Top with almonds and grated carrots. Serve.

*Figs are a sweet fruit with soft flesh and tiny edible seeds. They are a good source of iron, calcium and phosphorus. You can eat figs raw, with or without their peel, or use them in baked goods.*


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**Roasted turkey with balsamic brown sugar sauce**

Serves 10

**Ingredients:**

- 1 whole turkey (about 15 pounds), thawed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 3 to 4 cloves garlic
- 1/2 cup water

**For the sauce:**

- 1 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup defatted pan drippings
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar

**Directions:** Preheat the oven to 325 F.

Rinse the turkey inside and out. Pat dry with paper towels. Place the turkey breast-side up on a rack in a roasting pan. Rub the turkey with the oil, a sprig of rosemary and garlic cloves. Place all of the rosemary and garlic inside the bird. Loosely tie the legs together. Place into the middle of the oven.

When the skin is light (after about 1 1/2 hours) cover the breast with a tent of foil to prevent overcooking the breast. Check the doneness after the bird has roasted about 3 to 3 1/2 hours. Turkey is done when the thigh is pierced deeply and juices run clear (180 to 185 F) or when the breast muscle reaches 170 to 175 F.

Remove the turkey from the oven. Let it stand about 20 minutes to allow juices to settle in the meat. Deglaze the pan by adding 1/2 cup water. Stir to scrape up browned bits. Pour pan drippings into a gravy separator. Reserve 1 cup of defatted pan drippings for sauce.

To make the sauce, in a pan or microwave dish, stir together the vinegar, defatted pan drippings and brown sugar. Warm the sauce until the flavor is just released, about 15 seconds in the microwave, or over low heat on the stove until steam "escapes." Don't boil.

Carve the turkey/ drizzle slices with the warmed sauce. Serve immediately.

*This recipe substitutes the sauce for adding fat- [http://www.mayoclinic.com/](http://www.mayoclinic.com/)*