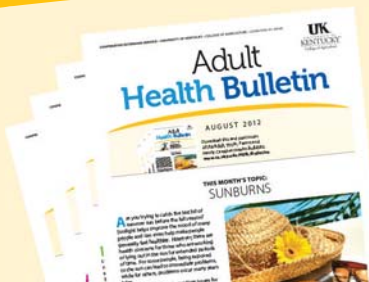


Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HANDLING HOLIDAY STRESS

Some people think of Santa, joy, reindeer and presents when the holidays come around. Others may think of stress, exhaustion, long lines and misery. It is not uncommon to find yourself in the latter category, especially if you have numerous family gatherings and a long list of shopping to get done. It may seem like the holidays are more work than enjoyment.

Handling holiday stress can be hard. But if you follow some of these tips you may find yourself much more relaxed and rested during the holiday season.

- **Do not expect perfection.** Hollywood shows us many families with perfect holidays — everyone in the family gets along and is full of holiday cheer. Remember, that is not every family! Do not expect your family to live up to that model. Each family is unique.
- **Do something different.** If every year you do the same old routine, you may want to try something new this year. If everyone just sits



around on Christmas Day, perhaps your family can try to get out of the house. Go for a walk together or go see a movie.

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- **Not everything is important.** If you were unable to decorate the outside of the house this year, it's okay. If you did not get out all the Christmas dishes, that is okay too. Try not to stress about the little things that really have nothing to do with holiday spirit.
- **Help others.** A good way to put everything in perspective is to volunteer. Nothing shows the spirit of the holidays better than helping out those who may not have a lot.
- **Avoid the problem.** If you know that going to the mall on Saturday afternoon will cause you to get a headache, try to change your visit to a time when it is not as busy. You may even want to try online shopping or avoid the mall altogether to reduce stress.
- **Ask for help.** If you always have all the family over for dinner, ask them to help you. Family can help set the table, stir a pot, reach a serving plate on a high shelf or even do dishes. You may just need to ask.
- **Do not overbook yourself.** It is often easy this time of year to have many events and parties to attend. Set a limit so that you only go to the events or parties that you really want to attend.
- **Stick to your budget.** Know how much you are going to spend for each person you have to shop for, and stick to it. It is easy to get swept up in all the shopping madness, but by sticking to your budget you will not be paying for the holidays long after they are over.
- **Stick to your normal schedule.** If you usually go to bed at 10:30, do not try to stay up all

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night wrapping presents or preparing for a get-together. Try to spread the work over the next few weeks.

- **Stay active.** Did you know that being active can actually give you more energy? Not to mention that activity can help you with all the extra calories you may be eating.

Remember it is important to take care this time of the year. When you get rundown and stressed, you are more likely to get sick. With some of these tips you should be able to keep stress down and enjoy this time of year.

Happy Holidays!

SOURCE:

WebMD <http://www.webmd.com/depression/features/25-ways-find-joy-balance-during-holidays?page=4>. September 2011

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