



Holiday Health and Safety Tips

1. 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, and rub them together for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

2. Manage stress and depression

The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. Volunteering your time to help others is also a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations; set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. Seek professional help if seasonal depression becomes too overwhelming.

3. 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. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat or seat belt appropriate for his/her height, weight and age.

4. Eat smart

The holiday season is a time to feast with family and friends; unfortunately, for many, it also becomes a time for overeating and weight gain. Be realistic. Don't try to lose pounds during the holidays; instead, try to maintain your current weight. Before leaving for a party, eat a light snack like raw vegetables or a piece of fruit to curb your appetite. Bring your own healthy dish to a holiday gathering. Eat your favorites until you are satisfied, not stuffed. If you overeat at one meal, go light on the next.

5. Stay active

Make exercise appointments on your calendar, and keep these appointments just as you would any other important engagement. Consider doing workouts in the morning so you don't get distracted later in the day by parties, events or other holiday hoopla. If you're headed to the mall to do some holiday shopping, avoid those fiercely fought-over prime parking spots and park far away from the entrance to get some exercise. After eating a big meal, go for a brisk 30-to-45 minute walk and look at the Christmas lights in the neighborhood.

6. Prevent injuries and damage

Keep candles away from Christmas trees, children, pets, walkways 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. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Beware of tree ornaments, gift wrapping items, light bulbs, icicles, tinsel and small toys which can potential choking hazards for small children.

