

National Health Observances

December

World AIDS Month
Safe Toys & Gifts Month
National Drunk & Drugged Driving
Prevention Month

Dec. 1

World AIDS Day

Dec. 2

Special Education Week

Dec. 12

Poinsetta Day

Week of Dec. 1 - 7

Cookie Cutter Week

Week of Dec. 10 - 17

Human Rights Week

Week of Dec. 16 - 22

Gluten-Free Baking Week

Cascade Centers EAP Access

Cascade Centers provides assessment, short-term problem solving, referrals, training, and consultations to a wide array of employers and agencies.

We can help! Call Cascade Centers to schedule an in-person appointment or get the resources you need.

For more information, please call us at :

1-800-433-2320

12 Ways to Keep the Holidays Stress-Free

The holidays are supposed to be a time of warmth, joy and excitement. And for many people, they are.

Still, the anxiety of having too much to do in too little time, the pressure of unrealistic expectations and the tendency to overeat and overspend can easily overshadow holiday happiness. The following suggestions will help you enjoy the season to its fullest with a minimum of stress.



- If you overeat, get right back into your normal routine the next day.

Shop Smart

- Give yourself plenty of time to complete your holiday shopping. Shop with an itemized list of what you'll buy for each person and a ballpark figure of what you'll spend.
- Brainstorm for gift ideas. If you're stumped on what to buy, consider what's important to the gift recipient. To personalize a gift that isn't personal, give the story behind it. For a book, write an inscription that explains why you're giving it or mention specific pages the recipient may find interesting.

Party Smart

- Don't arrive at a party starving; you're likely to overeat. Instead, before you leave home eat a piece of fruit, a small salad or a cup of low-fat yogurt. Eating a healthful snack will prevent you from overindulging on mini quiches and other high-fat fare when you arrive.
- Avoid handfuls of anything. At the appetizer table, fill your plate three-quarters full with fresh vegetables and fruit. Reserve the remaining quarter for anything you want, even if it's high in fat, so you don't feel deprived.
- Don't feel obligated to eat everything on your plate or to have dessert. And think twice before going back for seconds.
- Keep parties simple by having a buffet instead of a formal sit-down dinner. Serve uncomplicated dishes (made with six ingredients or less) that you've made before.
- Buy nonperishable party items days, even weeks, in advance. These include groceries, beverages, candles, napkins and decorations. Save the day before to buy items with a short shelf life, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers.

- Cook ahead. On the day before your party, prepare salad dressings, stews, casseroles, cold sauces, soups, desserts and dips. That way, during the party, you can spend as much time as possible with your guests.



- Hire a helper. To make your party more manageable, employ a teenager or a catering waiter to help you serve during the party and clean up afterward.
- Devise games guests can play to help spark conversation. For example, tape a piece of paper with the name of a movie character onto the back of guests when they arrive. Challenge them to guess who



their characters are, with clues provided by the other guests.

- Be sociable. Attending parties when you don't know many people

can be stressful. To break the ice, elect yourself the official introducer. If you see someone standing alone, go over and ask nonthreatening openers. For example, ask these questions at a corporate function: How do you fit into the company? Are you a spouse or an employee? What do you do? What does your spouse do?

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Help For The Holiday Blues

If you are experiencing holiday blues, try to decrease or alleviate them by doing these things:

- Talk to someone honestly.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Stick within your normal life routine as much as possible.
- Stick to a realistic budget.
- Establish realistic goals and expectations.
- Do not label the season as a time to cure past problems.
- Find time for yourself.
- Enjoy free holiday activities.
- Try to celebrate the holiday in a different way.

The holiday blues can be quite common, but if you are feeling especially down -- for example, your sleep or your appetite is affected, contact Cascade EAP for help and guidance.

A Guide to Holiday Survival

Create Your Own Traditions: The holidays are directly connected to the traditions of the past. When those traditions are additionally connected to painful or troubling memories, it's time to create healthy traditions of your own. Think of new events you can participate in on your own or invite new people to join you in an old tradition. Make a point to keep your new traditions alive each year and they will start to add happy memories to your holiday spirit.

Be a Participant: Sometimes what you need are good friends around you. Look for opportunities to get involved in holiday activities that get you out having fun with friends and family. Attend parties, invite friends to local activities, or even take a trip to some regional event. A little holiday spirit can go a long way.

Ask for Others to Chip In: Just because you are hosting the holiday event does not mean everyone else gets to sit back and do nothing. Remember, the true meaning of holidays often comes down to sharing the holiday experience with the ones you love and feeling thankful and blessed. Welcome everyone to share his or her favorite recipe or bring a game that helps unite everyone. Getting together on a holiday because of tradition is one thing, but joining families and creating new memories and traditions will bring you closer and make the time you spend together more meaningful.

Keep Your Life in Focus: It can be easy to focus on what you don't have, and not what you do have, during the holidays. Make a point to celebrate the good things in your life. Contact your friends and remind them of how much you value their friendship and support. Another great way to remind yourself of how fortunate you are is to volunteer at a local charity or food kitchen to help others and give back to your community.



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