



HELPING HANDS

Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping

Taken from Mayo Clinic on-line - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/MH00030/NSECTIONGROUP=2>



Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.

By Mayo Clinic staff:

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

1. **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
2. **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
3. **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.
4. **Set aside differences.** 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. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.
5. **Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Try these alternatives: Donate to a charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts or start a family gift exchange.
6. **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
7. **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.
8. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks. Continue to get plenty of sleep and physical activity.
9. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Take a walk at night and stargaze. Listen to soothing music. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.
10. **Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.



Healthy Eating During The Holidays

(Excerpts from kids.gov)



During the holidays, yummy food and tasty treats are everywhere. It would be easy to let healthy eating habits slide, but holidays can still be healthy. Here are some tips to help you and your family stay on track with good eating habits:

- Nibble on health snacks like whole grain crackers, fruit, or raw vegetables before the big feast. You will eat less.
- When you are at a party or having a holiday meal, look for the foods that are healthier, like veggies or fruits, and make sure to eat some of those.
- It takes your brain some time to signal you are full. Wait 10-15 minutes before eating seconds. This may keep you from overeating!
- It's not rude to say no to food. Don't be



pressured to eat, if you aren't hungry.

•Eating holiday goodies like fudge, peanut brittle, cookies, and other baked goods is fine, but eat them in small portions.

You can help make healthy holiday food with your parents. Look for low-fat recipes that substitute butter and oil with non-fat ingredients like applesauce or pumpkin.



IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinators. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you are experiencing.

United Airlines EAP Coordinator
Mike "Mac" McGovern, Cell: 570-350-0497

USAir/American EAP Coordinator
Chris Davis, Cell: 704-572-4859

Hawaiian Airways EAP Coordinator
Maurice Masaki, Cell: 808-728-4316

District 141 EAP Director
Bryan Hutchinson, M.S. Cell: 303-229-5117

Calendar

EAP I-IV Classes
William W. Winpisinger
Education Center

2015

EAP I: January 31-February 6, 2015

EAP II: February 21-February 27

EAP III: April 11-April 17

EAP IV: September 19-September 25

2014 Holiday Dates

Hanukkah

December 16-24, 2014

Christmas

December 25, 2014

Kwanzaa

December 26, 2014-January 1, 2015