

BHS ASSIST E-NEWS

"That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way." - Dorris Lessing



PUMPKIN BREAD



- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 1 stick butter
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg



the great
pumpkin

Grease 1 lb. (4.5 x 8.5 x 2.5-in) bread pan. Sift flour and add to salt, baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir together pumpkin and buttermilk. In a third bowl, cream butter, vanilla, sugar, and egg. Alternately combine butter, mix, dry mix, and pumpkin mix. Put into pan and smooth top. Bake 50-55 minutes at 350°F. Cool on racks.

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Survey Reveals Interesting Facts about Stress and the Holiday Season

% Rating Stress Factor a "5" or Higher	Health	Fitness	Weight	Personal Relations	Finances
	28%	25%	39%	30%	63%

A study to measure the stress level of U.S. adults in anticipation of the 2008 holiday season was designed and analyzed by KW Strategems and conducted November 3-6, 2008. A representative sampling of 800 people of various ages responded to the survey.

Finances are the most likely cause of holiday stress!

It comes as no surprise that finances ranked #1 as the biggest source of holiday stress, followed by personal relations, weight, fitness, and health. While the results may come as no surprise, what may not be as quickly thought of, is that having this list, and ranking our own personal stressors during this holiday season can help us to minimize or even eliminate them for the 2009 holiday season.

Now is the time to prepare!

Start today with a simple notebook that allows for adding and removing pages. Think about the holiday preparations that you have completed and those still remaining. Look under your tree and make a list all of the gifts you will be giving this year, their cost, and who they are for. You may want to use the categories indicated in the study, finances, personal relations, weight, fitness, and health to assess your stress level. Add any other categories that are stressful to you.



A New Year a new you!

At the conclusion of the holiday, review your notebook with a critical eye.

Was holiday spending a stressor? Did you spend more than intended? What could you have done differently to reduce the stress? Some ideas include:

- Shopping throughout the year instead of having a number of gifts to buy in a short amount of time.
- Setting a realistic budget and making a list of everyone you have to buy for (use the list of people you purchased gifts for and add any last minute gifts purchased), reviewing that list to determine if it is in line with your goals and adjusting if needed.
- Discuss with family and friends their feelings about your current traditions. They may feel as financially stressed as you and opt to make different plans for next year.
- Consider your creative side. Tap into your talents and plan for homemade gifts for next year.

Ask this same question for all of your stressors. List ideas for minimizing or eliminating that particular stressor. Talk with others about ways they have eliminated stress in that area. Most of all, believe that the holidays do not have to be stressful and that, with planning, you too can look forward to the holiday season.

Are you holding on to traditions that no longer serve a purpose?



"I think we're missing someone from our holiday card list."

Alcohol-related Traffic Deaths Jump on New Year's Eve

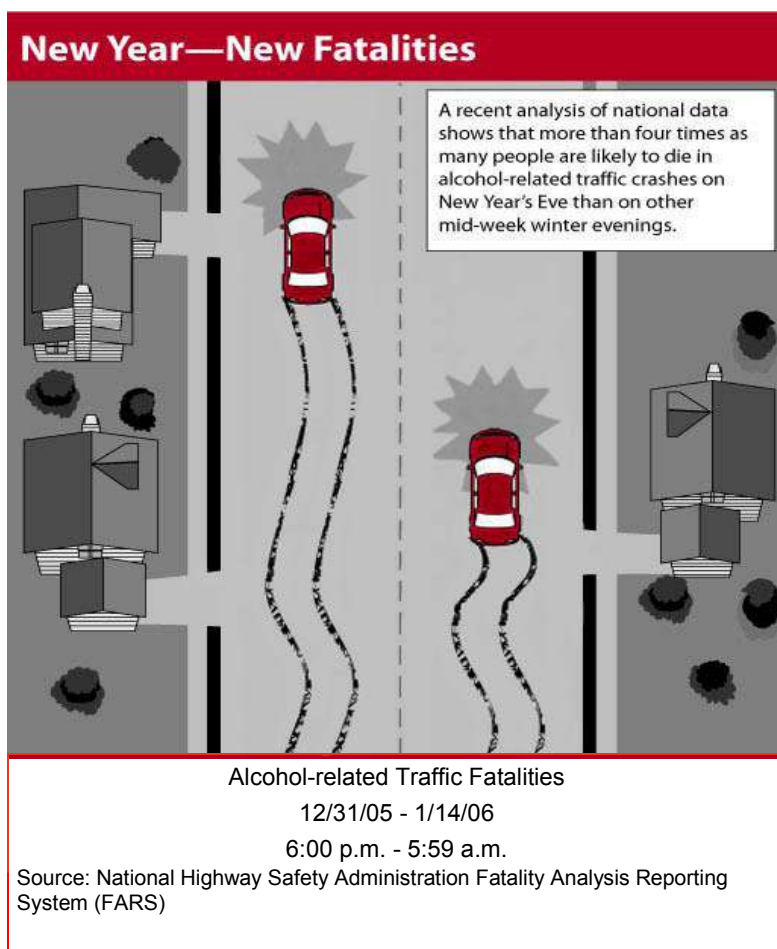
Some New Year's predictions are, tragically, very reliable. For example, more people are likely to die in alcohol-related traffic crashes on New Year's Eve than on other mid-week winter evenings. Just look at the numbers. A recent analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration statistics shows that, by the time our country finished ringing in the year 2006 (the last year for which data are available), 84 people had died in alcohol-related traffic crashes in the 12-hour span between 6:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve and 5:59 a.m. the next morning. Two weeks later, on the same night of the week, the death toll dropped to 57.

Alcohol's Effects Begin Quickly

Many New Year's revelers get into trouble because they do not recognize that critical driving-related skills and decision-making abilities are diminished long before they begin to show the obvious physical signs of intoxication. Initially, alcohol acts as a stimulant and if you drink you may temporarily feel upbeat and excited. But don't be fooled. Inhibitions and judgment are soon affected, increasing the chance of making reckless decisions behind the wheel. As more alcohol is consumed, fine motor skills and reaction time begin to suffer and behavior becomes poorly controlled and sometimes aggressive, compromising driving abilities even further. Continued drinking can lead to the slurred speech and loss of coordination and balance that we typically associate with being "drunk." At higher levels alcohol acts as a depressant, which causes people to become sleepy and sometimes pass out.

Even When Drinking Stops—Alcohol's Effects Do Not

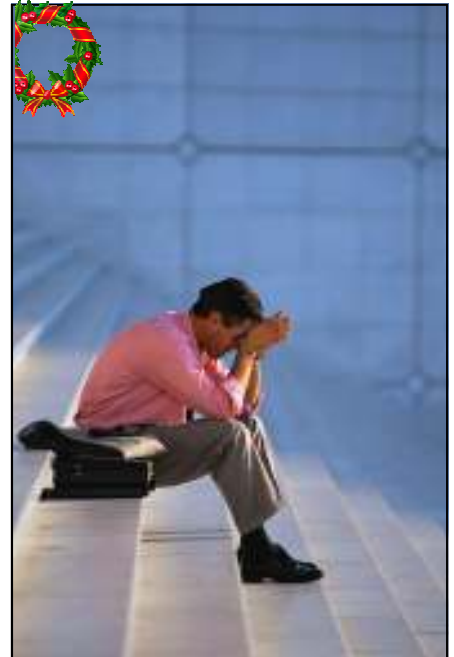
Driving home late at night is especially hazardous because natural drowsiness is magnified by the depressant action of alcohol. Driving abilities may even be impaired the next day, when any alcohol remaining in the system, or the general headache and disorientation associated with hangovers, contributes to the general feelings of sluggishness, even though the person no longer feels "drunk."



No One Intends to Harm Anyone When They Get Behind the Wheel on New Year's Eve.

But certain facts are clear—there's no way to speed up the brain's recovery from alcohol. So this New Year's Eve, do not underestimate the effects of alcohol. Don't believe you can beat them. Pace yourself and be aware of how much you've consumed throughout the night. And as you think about the consequences of an arrest or a potentially fatal traffic crash, make alternative plans to get home safely.

Coping with Grief During the Holidays



A question commonly asked by bereaved people at this time of year is, "How can I get through the holidays?" There is really no single answer of what one should or should not do. The Hospice Foundation of America stresses one guiding principle: do what is comfortable. Some may find it helpful to be with family and friends, emphasizing the familiar. Others may wish to avoid old sights and sounds and will find new ways to acknowledge the season, perhaps even taking a trip.

Key points from HFA's Holiday Grief Campaign:

- Plan for the approaching holidays. Be aware that this may be a difficult time for you. The additional stress may affect you emotionally, cognitively, and physically; this is a normal reaction. It is important to be prepared for these feelings.
- Recognize that holidays will not be the same. If you try to keep everything as it was, you will be disappointed. Doing things a bit differently can acknowledge the change while preserving continuity with the past.
- Be careful not to isolate yourself. It is alright to take time for yourself but don't cut yourself off from the support of family and friends.
- The holidays may affect other family members. Talk over your plans. Respect their choices and needs, and compromise if necessary.
- Avoid additional stress. Decide what you really want to do, and what can be avoided.

As part of their campaign to educate and assist people at this time of the year, the Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) produces several resources, including a special Holiday issue of their bereavement newsletter, *Journeys*, and their *Living With Grief* brochure series. These can be accessed at www.hospicefoundation.org

Additionally, your company's EAP provides counseling to assist you with issues related to your loss. Contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800.245.1150 for information on benefits that may be available to you and your dependents.



An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.

- Bill Vaughan