

Tips for Stress-Free Holidays

The holidays are a fun, festive time for family and friends. But sometimes the stress of the season can become overwhelming. To help you enjoy the season to its fullest, consider the following tips:

Eat Smart

- Eat a piece of fruit, a small salad or a cup of low-fat yogurt before arriving at a holiday party. 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 won't feel deprived.
- Don't feel obligated to eat everything on your plate or to have dessert. Think twice before going back for seconds.

Shop Smart

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

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Is it Depression?

With symptoms like headaches, backaches, joint pain and stomach problems, symptoms of depression can often look like other illnesses. Other symptoms, like memory lapses and concentration issues, can also mimic medical problems.

Depressed individuals often focus on these symptoms because they are easier to describe than their feelings of sadness, fatigue, irritability or hopelessness.

In addition to physical symptoms, other behaviors can be an indication of depression. Drinking excessively or abusing drugs, for example, may actually be an attempt to self-medicate a depressive disorder.

It is important to remember that depression is a medical condition and will not go away by itself; however, there are effective treatments that can relieve symptoms in as little as a few short weeks. Different people need different treatment to overcome depression. That could include medication, talk therapy or a combination of both.

If you think you or a loved one may be suffering from depression, review the “Checklist for Depression” above. If you’ve experienced any of these symptoms for two weeks or more, call BHS at 800-245-1150 and talk with your Care Coordinator about options for assistance. Ψ

Checklist for Depression

If you have experienced any of the following symptoms for two weeks or more, contact your BHS Care Coordinator for assistance:

- Sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Inappropriate feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Irritability
- Recurring aches and pains
- Thoughts of death or suicide



“In a conversation, keep in mind that you’re more interested in what you have to say than anyone else is.”

~ *Andy Rooney, radio and television writer*

Listening can be a challenging skill to learn, but an invaluable one in our personal and professional lives. To practice and improve your listening skills, use some of the many opportunities that this holiday season brings.



401(k) for Kids

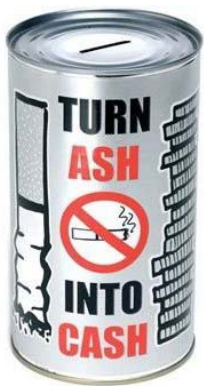
Give allowance a twist by treating your children like employees. Just as companies match workers’ retirement contributions, pledge to match a percentage of whatever sum your kids save. Be clear about the rules, like whether you’re contributing 50 cents for each dollar and what the weekly maximum match is. Ψ

Stop Smoking & Start Saving

As you may already be immune to all the health talk about cigarettes, consider the financial aspects:

- Currently the average retail price in the USA (including sales tax) is \$5.29 a pack.
- For the pack-a-day habit, it would cost, on average, \$1,930 a year. If that money is conservatively invested over 30 years with an interest rate of 5% annually, adding savings to the principle, you end up with about \$134,000 in 30 years. To see how much money you'll save when you quit tobacco, visit www.ucanquit2.org and click on "Savings Calculator."

When you quit, you won't only save on the product itself, but in other ways as well. Think about this:



- If you smoke in your car, you lose around \$1,000 on its trade-in value just from the interior's smell and colorization from the smoke.
- When selling a home, realtors say that the smell of cigarettes turns off buyers. Most won't even show a smoker's house until it's had repainting, new draperies and complete carpet cleaning – costing thousands of dollars.
- A smoker spends more on dry cleaning, teeth cleaning and insurance.
- Statistics show that over time, a smoker earns less money than a non-smoker.
- Over 5% of employers prefer hiring non-smokers.

For more information about quitting smoking, visit www.smokefree.gov. Ψ

Preparing a Priority List

Having a priority list can mean the difference between mild and major success. Without one it is easy to procrastinate or, worse yet, to spend time on projects of little value while other, more meaningful projects are neglected.

Begin your priority list by writing down the tasks that face you. If they are large, break them down into steps. If these still seem large, break them down again. Do this until you have listed everything that you have to do.

Once you have done this, allocate priorities from A (very important) to D (less important). If too many tasks have a high priority, run through the list again and demote the less important ones. Once you have done this, rewrite the list in priority order. You will then be able to tackle each task in order of importance.

Use your priority list as a precise plan to accomplish your goals and achieve great success. Ψ



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Party Smart

- Keep parties simple by having a buffet instead of a formal sit-down dinner. Serve uncomplicated dishes that you have 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. Prepare things like salad dressings, stews, casseroles, cold sauces, soups, desserts and dips as far in advance as possible. Remember that some dishes can be frozen and then thawed, cooked or reheated.
- To make your party more manageable, employ a teenager or catering server to help you during the party and to clean up afterward.
- 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 and your spouse do? Ψ

Tips for Healthier Soups

To make your favorite soup recipes even healthier, try these tips:

- Add vegetables raw instead of sautéing in butter or fat.
- If a recipe calls for heavy cream, substitute vegetable puree. Simply remove a portion of the cooked vegetables and puree in the blender.
- Remove the skin and fat from meat.
- Sear, simmer or roast meat before adding to the soup.
- Remove or reduce fat in soups. To do this, first cover the soup halfway with a lid or foil. Skim any fat that rises to the surface. Second, refrigerate the soup after it is cooked. The fat will rise to the top as the soup cools. Skim fat from the top before reheating. Ψ



Chunky White Bean Soup

Ingredients:

- 12 oz lean ground turkey breast
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 tbs olive oil
- Two 15-oz cans great northern beans
- One 16-oz jar green salsa
- 1 ¾ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 ½ tsp cumin

Instructions:

- Sauté turkey breast and onion in olive oil; drain fat
- Add beans, green salsa, chicken broth and cumin
- Simmer, covered, 15 min

Prep time: 15 min; **Cook time:** 15 min

Nutrition Information:

383 calories, 38g protein, 53g carbs, 3g fat