

Here's to Your Health!

How to De-Stress During the Holidays!

Sleigh bells, gingerbread, and Hallmark cards. If only that's all there was to Christmas. However, with the season comes the headaches of crowded stores, traffic jams, hundreds of parties, and credit card bills piled upon your already busy life. Don't let Christmas be something you dread. Here are tips to help you cope with the stress of the season and help put the "Ho Ho Ho!" back in your holiday!

Stay Out of Debt - Expensive gifts don't guarantee a great Christmas, especially if the gift isn't wanted. Set a limit within your budget for every person on your list so you don't break bank. Consider a gift exchange within your family so that everyone can have a financial break, too. Just remember that everyone will be thankful if it's given with love.

Plan Ahead - Set aside specific days for shopping, cooking,

delivering gifts, visiting loved ones, and parties you've been invited to. If a last minute event comes up, don't beat yourself up if you have to politely decline the invitation.

Avoid Family Feuds -

The holidays are a great opportunity for quality family time, but not if your family is full of conflict. All the gatherings mean ample opportunities for relatives to get into each other's business. Agree to set aside differences for a more appropriate time, and be understanding if others become upset. Consider having your holiday dinner at a nice restaurant where all will be on their best behavior.

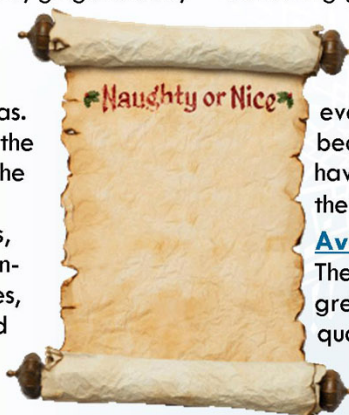
Remember Healthy Habits -

All the holiday hubbub means that sooner or later, you're going to skip a meal or two and lose out on sleep. As much as possible, try and fit these into

your busy schedule. It's NOT okay to neglect yourself while you're busy thinking about others. Bring healthy snacks along when you know you'll be busy. Take naps whenever you can to keep those visions of sugar plums dancing in your head.

Take a Breather - 30 minutes alone without any holiday obligations can refresh you enough to tackle the things you need to do. Go for a jog, listen to music...etc.

Be Realistic - It's easy to get overly ambitious when it comes to the holidays. Sure, the 20,000 Christmas light display would look great next to your 5-foot gingerbread house during your 7-course holiday meal, but be reasonable. Ask for help and don't be afraid to take it. Just remember, the spirit of Christmas is NOT in the lights, or the fancy gingerbread displays, or even in the turkey, but in the happy faces of loved ones, including yourself!



Did You Know?

The red "flowers" of the poinsettia are not flowers but colored leaves! The leaves are known to be bright red but can also be orange, green, pink, cream, or white. The flowers are actually the small yellow structures at the center of each leaf bunch. There is a common misconception that the poinsettia is highly poisonous. This is not true; it is only mildly irritating to the skin and may cause diarrhea or vomiting if eaten. Most exposures are accidental and do not require medical treatment. The origin of this myth stems from its name which many link to "poison," and a 1919 urban legend of a child who died after eating a poinsettia leaf!



Health & Wellness Frequently Asked Questions!



Q: I hear people saying that eating sweets is not good for you because it causes diabetes. Is this why I have diabetes? And since I'm on insulin and taking medication, that means I can eat as many sweets as I want, right?

A: Actually, both of those assumptions are WRONG and couldn't be

farther from the truth. Diabetes is caused by your body's inability to properly use or produce the hormone *insulin*. This hormone is responsible for breaking down the sugar in your body. With diabetes, this breakdown doesn't occur, leaving high levels of sugar (glucose) in your blood. Diabetes is NOT caused by eating too many sweets.

Also, even though you're on medications to control your diabetes, this does NOT mean you can eat all the Christmas cookies and holiday cakes you want. Prescriptions are meant to aid you, not take the place of proper eating and exercise. The healthier you eat and the healthier you are, the better the medicines will work for you!



Handwashing During the Holidays

It's no coincidence that the flu season happens during Holiday season. With all the crowded stores, family gatherings, and cheek-kissing you're doing,

you're bound to pick something up. Luckily, there IS something you can do to keep you and your family free from the flu this holiday season,

and that's WASH YOUR HANDS!

Proper hand-washing is always the first line of defense when it comes to any illness or disease. Think about all those hands you're shaking and all the shopping carts and door handles you're touching that have come into contact with thousands of people's hands before you. It's not a pleasant thought, especially with the fact that a square inch of skin on the human hand holds millions of bacteria, germs, and who knows what else!

Wash your hands often during the day under warm, soapy water. If a faucet isn't available, then carry around hand sanitizer as you shop and hit all your holiday parties. After all, the last gift you want during Christmas is the flu!

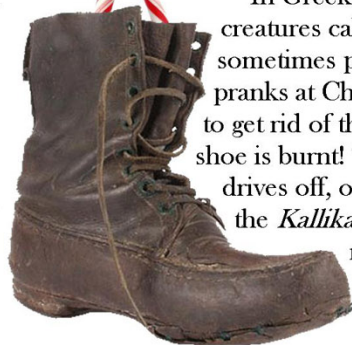


Christmas All Around the World!

An artificial spider and web are often included in the decorations on Ukrainian Christmas trees! Folklore has it that finding a spider web **in** the house on Christmas morning is a sign of good luck!

In Sweden, a common Christmas decoration is the *Julbukk*, a small goat figurine usually made of straw!

Many Italian households include an "Urn of Fate" in their Christmas celebrations! The Urn is brought out on Christmas eve and contains a



wrapped present for each person in the household! If you pick the gift with your name on it, you get to keep it! Otherwise you put it back and try again!

In Greek legend, malicious creatures called *Kallikantzaroi* sometimes play troublesome pranks at Christmas time! In order to get rid of them, salt or an old shoe is burnt! The pungent stench drives off, or at least discourages, the *Kallikantzaroi*! Another technique involves hanging a pig's jawbone by the door!

Did You Know?

Contrary to popular belief, pickles and ice cream are not the foods most often craved by pregnant women! It's **Nachos!**



Questions? Comments?

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Ginger Pear Cheesecake

Yield: 12 servings

6 dried pear halves, chopped
1/3 cup crystallized ginger
1/2 cup water
1 cup low-fat granola
16 oz. low-fat cottage cheese
16 oz. non-fat cream cheese
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
3 large eggs
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp. vanilla extract



Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease 9-inch spring-form pan. Place pears, ginger, & water in saucepan; bring to simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat, cover and cook until liquid is absorbed and fruit is softened, 10-14 minutes. Put granola in food processor or blender until finely ground. Pour into prepared pan; turn and tilt pan to coat sides and press down into bottom to make an even layer.

Transfer pear mix to food processor; process until paste forms. Let cool for 10 minutes. Add cottage and cream cheese and mix until combined. Add granulated and brown sugars until smooth. With processor running, add eggs one at a time. Add flour and vanilla until creamy. Pour batter into pan. Tap pan against counter a few times.

Bake until set, about 50 minutes. Turn oven off, let cheesecake stand in oven with door ajar for 1 hour. Transfer to wire rack to cool for 1 hour; refrigerate for 4 hours before serving.

Calories 209
Fat 2g
Saturated Fat 1g
Cholesterol 58mg
Sodium 384mg
Carbohydrates 35mg
Fiber 1g
Protein 13g

Season's Greetings!



From the Good Guys & Gals!

