



CARES Connection

A Publication for CARES Members

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Keys to a Healthy Holiday

Holidays bring fun times as well as times of stress. Planning ahead can help you avoid some of the stress. Here are some keys to creating a healthy holiday.

Let Go of unrealistic expectations
You can't recreate the past and you can't have perfect holidays.

Acknowledge and express feelings honestly If a loved one has recently died or you aren't able to be with your loved ones, realize that it is normal to feel sadness or grief.

Re-evaluate your traditions
As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Hold on to those you can and want to, but accept that you may have to let go of some traditions.

Don't expect extended-family problems to disappear just because it's the holiday season. Let go of past conflicts and resentments and learn to forgive. Balance your own needs with your family's needs. Reduce the amount of time you plan to spend with difficult family members.

Prepare for extra intensity. Learn to say no. Take some quiet time to read or unwind in the bathtub. Eliminate stressful or unnecessary activities and chores—people will understand if you can't do certain activities.

Seek Support If you struggle with loneliness or loss go to a place where you can find support and encouragement. Consider volunteering—getting involved and helping others can lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

Be careful about over-indulging Eat, drink, smoke and spend in moderation. Don't let the holidays become a dietary free-for-all. Continue to get plenty of sleep and schedule time for physical exercise. Take time for yourself. Create a budget and be careful about using credit.

Remind yourself of the true meaning of the holidays. Focus on what is most positive about the holidays. Beware of excessive commercialism.

Plan ahead Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Expect travel delays, especially if you're flying.

Source: CIGNA Behavioral Health

December is Safe Toy and Gift Month

The holiday season is the time when most of the toys and games are purchased. Most toys are safe; however, they can become dangerous if misused or given to children who are too young to play with them. In 2002, an estimated 165,200 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for toy-related injuries and at least 13 children died from those injuries.

Tips for buying safe toys:

- When selecting toys, consider the child's age, interest and skill level.
- Look for quality design and construction and follow age and safety recommendations on the label.
- Keep up with recalls. The US Consumer Product & Safety Commission has a list (with pictures) of recalled toys and other items. www.cpsc.gov
- Avoid toys with sharp points or edges and toys that produce loud noises or projectiles.
- Avoid electrical toys with heating elements for children under 8.

Source: www.safekids.org

Picture This

To help control portion size, visualize these objects when selecting foods:



- 3 oz. meat—a deck of cards
- Medium baked potato—computer mouse
- 1 oz cheese—size of 4 dice
- 1/2 C pasta—size of a tennis ball
- Average Bagel—size of a hockey puck
- 2 T peanut butter—size of a ping pong ball
- Medium apple or orange—size of a tennis ball
- 1 c chopped raw vegetables or fruit—size of a baseball

Source: www.cancer.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that breathing deeply can help you to relax? When you're feeling tense, take a minute or two, stop everything, and simply breathe. Breathe in and out slowly and deeply. Count ten breaths and return to the task at hand. You'll find yourself more relaxed and better able to focus on what you need to.

Winter Wellness

Here are some tips to help protect yourself and your co-workers:

Stay home when you're ill. See a doctor as necessary.

Wash your hands often. Wash with soap and warm water for 20 seconds to help get rid of germs.

Sneeze or cough into a tissue instead of your hand, then throw away. Clean your hands afterward. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.



Give Yourself a Gift

Make a list of people and activities you enjoy but neglect to see or do. Take some time and schedule those people and activities into your life.

The information in CARES Connection is intended to complement the advice of your health care provider and not to replace it. Before making any changes in your medication, diet or exercise, consult with your health care professional.

CARES Connection is a publication of Collegiate Association Resource of the Southwest, Inc. Send your comments, recommendations, or questions to: connection@caresbenefits.org