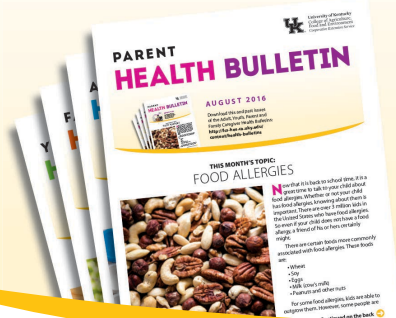


PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



DECEMBER 2017

Download this and past issues of the Adult, Youth, Parent and Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:
<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

KEEPING STRESS OUT OF THE HOLIDAYS



For many, the holiday season brings an increased sense of family responsibility and additional feelings of stress. It may seem like the holidays are more work than enjoyment with numerous family gatherings and long lists to be done. This is not uncommon.

Handling holiday stress is hard. However, if you follow these healthy stress techniques you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even find yourself relaxed and enjoying the holiday season.

Forget perfection

The holidays do not have to be perfect or the same as last year. It is OK if you have a little clutter in the house or dinner on the table a few minutes late.

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Before you go shopping, know how much you can afford for gifts and food. Then stick to your budget.

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You cannot do it all. As families grow, traditions often change as well. Do not sweat it. Instead, focus your energy on enjoying the time spent with loved ones.

Reach out

If you feel overwhelmed, ask for help. Accepting help and support from those who care about you can help ease stress. You may just need to ask. Helping others and volunteering your time is always a good way to lift your spirits as well. Nothing shows the spirit of the holidays better than helping others.

Set aside differences

Try to accept family members and friends for who they are. Set aside past matters for a later time. Understand, others may say things or get upset if something goes wrong, but chances are they are feeling holiday stress too.

Plan ahead

Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other holiday rituals. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That will help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy overlooked ingredients.

Stick to a budget

It is easy to be swept up in the holiday shopping madness. Before you go shopping, know how much you can afford for gifts and food. Then stick to your budget.

Learn to say no

Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Do not try to squeeze in more holiday than you can handle. Friends and family will understand if you cannot join in for every party or gathering.

Take care of yourself

Prioritize your needs and feelings. Maybe that means spending just 15 minutes alone without



distractions to reduce stress and clear your mind. Physical activity can also help boost energy levels, leaving us feeling better and improving sleep.

Do not dread the holidays. Instead, use these tips to prevent the stress. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or family demands, so you can prepare for them and avoid a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

REFERENCES:

- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544?pg=1>
- <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/parents-holiday.aspx>

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HEALTH BULLETIN

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