

# Here's To A Healthy Holiday Season



The Holiday Season places so many more expectations on people and, even with the best of intentions, can become a time of dread if we are not careful. People cannot control every aspect of their personal holidays. However, individuals can make decisions ahead of time to help them manage the stress and the demands that so often leave us feeling exhausted and depleted going into the New Year. Here are a few things to consider:

- Set realistic expectations. Most of our friends and family do not fit the Norman Rockwell image that all the cards and commercials portray. Decide on a meaningful theme for yourself this year and let that guide your decisions.
- Communicate with your family and friends. The holidays can put extra pressure on relationships. Traditions can be changed for the better; especially, when everyone's opinion is respected.
- Budget within your means. Avoid or minimize credit card debt. Many people need to be cost conscious even if they are not talking about it. Be creative and do not attach yourself worth to the size of the gift(s).
- Watch your food intake. There is no guarantee that the extra calories will go away after the holidays. At parties, take small portions and limit alcohol intake. Drink water to fill yourself up and sit away from buffet/dessert tables.
- Get plenty of sleep. Sleep deprivation releases stress hormones into the blood stream that lowers our metabolism and increases our appetite that results in craving high sugar/carbohydrate foods.
- Exercise even if you do not have the time. This is one of the first self-care strategies people tend to give up when time is limited. If you intend to start working out as a New Year's resolution, start one month early.

The demands and expectations of the Holidays can be a challenging time for many people. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to listen 24/7 by calling 800-456-6327. Our counselors are here to help you and your family members with information, resources and a compassionate ear.

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