







Managing Holiday Stress


Techniques to help keep the holidays bright


Why are the holidays so stressful?

- Shorter, Darker days
- Unrealistic expectations
- Increased social obligations
- Loneliness
- Overindulging
- Increased spending



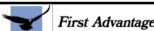
Stress: The Silent Killer

Stress is a state of tension that is created when a person responds to the demands and pressures that come from work, family and other external sources as well as those that are internally generated from self-imposed demands, obligations and self-criticisms.




Human Stress Response

- Sympathetic Nervous System Activity
 - *Prepares the body for action*
- Body Metabolism
 - *Heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, oxygen consumption*
- Blood Flow to Major Muscle Groups
 - *Prepares for fight or flight*
- Muscular Tension
- Blood Clotting



Stress & Its Effects

▪ High blood pressure	▪ Insomnia
▪ Heart attack	▪ Colitis
▪ Headaches	▪ More frequent colds
▪ Ulcers	▪ Asthma
▪ Neck and back pain	▪ Weight loss/gain
▪ Arthritis	▪ Sexual dysfunction



Stress & Its Effects

▪ Being irritable	▪ Over/under eating
▪ Getting angry easily	▪ Depression
▪ Lack of energy	▪ Using drugs
▪ Increased drinking	▪ Abnormal risk taking
▪ Disturbed sleep/nightmares	

Holiday Coping Strategies

- Create your own holiday traditions based on what is important to you.
- Make a list and check it twice. Keep a calendar of events to attend and when shopping will be done.
- Make plans in advance to spend time doing things you enjoy and find relaxing.

Holiday Coping Strategies

- Avoid over eating and over drinking.
- Plan you holiday gift giving and do not wait until the last minute.
- Understand that the days are shorter and you are getting less light. Seek assistance, if sadness persists.

General Coping Strategies

Sleep

- Avoid stimulants (caffeine or nicotine) or depressants (alcohol or “sleeping pills”) before bedtime.
- Give yourself time to unwind/wind down before retiring -- read a book, watch TV, do a quiet activity.
- Soak in a hot bath for 10-15 minutes before going to bed (also great for sore muscles!)
- Spend some time talking quietly with your spouse, children or a friend about your day.

General Coping Strategies

Diet

- Drink plenty of water.
- Stay away from high fat meals for lunch and dinner.
- Avoid excessive alcohol intake.
- Keep caffeine intake (coffee, tea and many soft drinks) to a minimum.
- Take time to properly enjoy your food
 - Coworkers, Family, & Friends

Ways To Combat Stress & Burnout



Relaxation!

EAP Services



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Further Resources



First Advantage®

- Kicking Your Holiday Stress Habits:
Tips for avoiding seasonal stress and
enjoying the holiday treasures.
 - *By Nancy Loving Tubesing, EdD and
Donald A. Tubesing, Mdiv, PhD*