

Wellness News



Tips to stay healthy throughout the year
Issue VIII ■ December 2020 ■ Holiday Stress

Holiday Stress

The holidays can be a difficult time of the year especially this year due to added stress of COVID-19. Whether you struggle with depression, disagreements with family members, fear of missing out, or even holiday blues, there are ways to make the holidays less stressful and more enjoyable this year.

Stay positive, manage stress

Often, on our own or with the media's help, we create unrealistic expectations. If not kept in check, holiday commitments and spending can lead to stress. Ways to manage holiday stress include:

- Balance work, home and social activities. Remember it is ok to say no.
- Ask for support from family, including the kids, and friends.
- Find time to relax, even just a few minutes can recharge you.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Create a budget for purchasing gifts, food and decorations.

Kids can get stressed too. Talk to your kids and include them when making holiday plans. Now is the perfect time to teach them the spirit of giving, especially since this time of year offers many ways to help those in need.

Can Stress be Healthy?

Stress, depending on the type and amount, can be healthy for us. As we move into the holiday season, it is important to identify what are positive and negative stressors in our lives. There are two different types of stress that we can experience: eustress and distress.

Eustress

- Moderate stress that is beneficial
- Allows us to cope with life's challenges and changes; a result of pushing ourselves outside of our comfort zones in order to grow
- Helps prepare us for more negative types of stress and usually occurs as a response to a situation that is challenging but achievable
- Good stress increases our feelings of self-efficacy, which is our ability to achieve different outcomes according to their actions

Distress

- Distress is a negative type of stress; distress is what most people are referring to when they talk about stress
- Distress suppresses our ability to cope with situations that are stressful and highlights our weaknesses and the ways that we are powerless
- Often, distress is unavoidable and usually is not a positive factor regarding our mental health

How Can we Beat the Stress?

It is important for us to recognize what triggers our stress and what coping mechanisms work in order for us to deal with stress.

Take Care of Yourself

- Stay Active
- Stay Connected
- Fuel your Body with healthy foods
- Limit your alcohol intake/stay hydrated

Set Reasonable Expectations

- Change your expectations for togetherness and gift giving due COVID-19 pandemic
- Embrace change and establish new traditions
- Set goals and don't overextend yourself
- Set a schedule and priorities

Surround Yourself with Positivity

- Avoid toxic people who bring up our own feelings of anxiety, depression, and stress
- Be grateful for the people around you and your health
- Utilize the power of technology to connect with loved ones during this holiday season

Best Practices

Acknowledge Stress

- Turn your fear and nervousness into intentional and decisive actions
- The more aware you are of your stress, the more power you have to control it

Accept Stress

- Acceptance of stressful emotions and feelings helps us to manage our emotions
- Denying or ignoring distressful emotions creates more stress

- Acceptance is not being passive, but rather changing our perspective to avoid unnecessary stress

Shift Stress

- Practice self-compassion: the more you learn to treat yourself with patience and kindness, the better equipped you are to extend compassion to others
- Prioritize self-care: nutrition, exercise, adequate sleep, mental breaks, and social connections
- Be empathetic: recognizing that people may be struggling may decrease your stress

Support and Resources

You cannot eliminate stress completely from your life, but it is important that to control how much it affects you. If you do not feel that you can control or manage your stress during the holidays or any other time, it is important that you seek professional help.

CareFirst Resources

- [Find A Doctor or Healthcare Facility](#) – Search by provider last name or type of provider within your network. Also search for health care facilities, including hospitals, urgent care and labs.
- [CareFirst Video Visit](#) – Get the care you need when and where you need it. For mental health, diet/nutrition, or breastfeeding support, schedule a visit and meet with a licensed professional from the comfort of your home.
- [Sharecare Inspirations/Relax 360](#) – Soothing video content in the palm of your hand designed to help reduce and eliminate daily stress.