

Holiday Blues

Do You Think You Suffer From the "Holiday Blues?"

The holidays can be a difficult time for many people. While it's a time to be with family and friends, the season also can cause much stress and fatigue. There are increased demands placed on your time, your patience, and your wallet. How to make the most out of the holidays without letting yourself down could be the biggest challenge you face this season.

Take Time for Yourself

- Try making a schedule, and figure out how best to maximize your time.
- Learn how to say "no" to commitments that you don't think you can manage.
- Relax, take a walk, collect your thoughts.
- Reflect on what the holidays mean to you personally.
- Exercise three times a week.

"With all the holiday hype, I feel like I'm expected to do too many things at once."

You Can Party -- Healthfully

Be mindful that high fat, high sugar foods can cause depression, and/or hyperactive, stressful behaviors in some people. According to the International Center for Nutritional Research, eating a lot of sugar and fats and increasing alcohol consumption may cause illness (intestinal toxemia, i.e. diarrhea) and vitamin deficiencies.

Instead, try to eat fiber foods like fresh vegetables, salads, and fruit; consume smaller portions of protein; drink a lot of water; reduce alcohol consumption; and allow at least three hours after eating before going to bed.

"Fattening food is everywhere, and at every party there's so much alcohol."

When hosting a gathering, make healthful food and drink alternatives available to your guests.

Salsa is a great substitute for cheese dip or sour cream, sorbet beats ice cream, and ginger ale and sparkling cider are festive holiday beverages. Plan games and activities for your guests, and be quick to make introductions. As a guest, reach for pretzels and sliced veggies, not chips.

Afraid of looking like a wet blanket? -- nurse a glass of lemon-lime soda with cranberry juice - and top it with a cherry!

The Truth About Holiday Drinking

While alcohol may make you feel less depressed temporarily, abusive drinking will only create problems.

Did you know...

- A couple of handfuls of potato chips can have over 10 grams of fat?
- Opting for chestnuts instead of peanuts saves you 13 grams of fat?

- If you air-pop your popcorn, you can enjoy it guilt-free?
- Make a budget plan and stick to it.
- Gifts made from the heart are priceless. Make someone dinner or bake them cookies or offer to babysit.
- Run errands for a friend in lieu of a present, or just visit with them -- your time is a precious gift.

**"I'm going broke
buying holiday
gifts."
Spend moderately
and be creative.**

Sure-fire holiday stress-reducers:

- Exercise three times a week.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Try something new.
- If you feel bad, don't ignore your feelings -- talk with someone you trust. Volunteer your time to community organizations.

Remember that the "holiday blues" can be manageable. Brief periods of sadness and stress at this time are normal for most people. If, however, you are experiencing serious prolonged depressive problems -- such as hopelessness, loss of energy, significant appetite and sleep changes, and/or thoughts of suicide -- you should seek help from a professional.

Happy Holidays!