

Wellness News

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Sydney Health



“Happiness will never come to those that fail to appreciate what they already have.” – Buddha

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How to Prioritize Self-Care During the Holidays

The holiday season is typically seen as a time of joy and merriment; of family and friends gathering and celebrating together. However, many have begun to have honest conversations about the darker side of “the most wonderful time of year.”

For many with mental illness, or those who have family and loved ones who face mental health issues, these can be tremendously difficult times. Perhaps we hope to feel connected to — and understood by — those around us during upcoming celebrations, only to be disappointed. Or maybe we imagine fulfilling family dinners, only to struggle fitting in. We might plan for parties with friends, only to find we’re feeling trapped in our own minds and lost to waves of depression.

These “holiday blues,” however, can be managed. Here are a few ways to create self-care activities to help carry us through the season.

Know and respect your limits

The holidays are often accompanied by a long list of obligations, errands and events. While these to-do lists can sometimes be fun or exhilarating, they can also be exhausting and emotionally draining. It’s important for you to know when to say “enough” or “no.” Small, successful outings are much better than running yourself into the ground or over-extending yourself.

You can set boundaries around how much time you spend on holiday tasks; plan for an afternoon trip instead of an all-day excursion, limiting yourself to only one or two stores. Don’t forget to take breaks and recharge. Going with one or two friends may also provide support and make the outing a fun activity.

Setting limits can also extend to your social interactions around the holidays. Invest your time and energy in relationships with people who are willing to give back. You need not attend every event you are invited to.

Set Reasonable Expectations

It’s natural to have high expectations of the holiday season; everywhere we look, we’re reminded that this is a time for family, joy and abundance. However, it’s equally important to check in with ourselves about managing our hopes and expectations.

Setting unrealistic expectations for people and events can lead to disappointment. Having no expectations is equally unrealistic and conveys that others don’t need to think about you, which can lead to disappointment. An honest and open appraisal of how people have treated you helps to predict how they will treat you in the future.

Avoid Known Triggers

For some, the holidays are a time of painful reminders. If you find yourself triggered by certain activities or interactions, do your best to replace them with emotionally fulfilling ones. If certain holiday movies remind you of sad times or lost friends, don’t watch them.

If a problematic relative or acquaintance is going to a holiday event, consider if you really need to be there. And if you do, then don’t actively engage with that person. You can also drop by for a brief check-in rather than attending the full event.

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Healthy Choices

The greatest gift you can give your family and the world is a healthy you.”

~ Joyce Meyer

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Find Ways To Give Back

Giving back, or helping others out around the holidays, is an excellent way to make a positive contribution and provide a sense of purpose and meaning. If you're looking for ways to get involved during the holiday season, consider offering support to service members deployed in remote areas or dangerous locations. You can also consider donating time to a local food bank. Another option to contribute to your community is by creating Care Kits for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Decorate For Comfort

During the holiday season, you may find yourself surrounded by an overwhelming number of decorations. This kind of celebration, however, is not a requirement for your own space. You need not use traditional holiday colors or symbols for decorating (unless they bring you joy, of course). Pick colors that give you a sense of happiness peace, safety, lightness or calm.

Consider a soft blanket to snuggle in with or a favorite pillow to cuddle. Choose a color that

makes you cozy. Are there certain fragrances that remind you of a special time or place? Perhaps a new scented candle or an essential oil might help make your house feel a bit more like your safe space.

Be Extra Giving To Yourself

While the holidays are an excellent opportunity to look outward and appreciate the people in your life, don't forget to appreciate yourself. Amid holiday shopping and gift giving, perhaps you can buy or make a present for future you — maybe something that will support your mental health or encourage a new and healthy hobby.

Consider mailing yourself a card or two. Think of an encouraging phrase or perhaps write a note reminding you of a strength or a special time. Jot these thoughts down in a card and send it to your future self.

HAPPY
Holidays

Six Tips to Enhance Immunity

Eat Well

Eating well means emphasizing plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.

Be Physically Active

Regular physical activity helps you feel better, sleep better and reduce anxiety. Combined with eating well, physical activity can help a person maintain a healthy weight.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Excess weight can affect how your body functions. Obesity, defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more in adults, is linked to impaired immune functions.

Get Enough Sleep

Scientific evidence is building that sleep loss can negatively affect different parts of the immune system.

Quit Smoking

Smoking can make the body less successful at fighting disease and increases risk for immune system problems, including rheumatoid arthritis.

Avoid Too Much Alcohol

Over time, excessive alcohol use can weaken the immune system.



Winter Safety Tips

Winter is a beautiful time of the year; however, winter weather conditions can create dangerous situations. When it comes to preparing, safeguard yourself with these winter safety tips.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides several winter safety tips to help you prepare for freezing temperatures.

Prepare your home

- Winterize your home with sound insulation. Use caulk and weather-strip frames for your doors and windows.
- Heat your home safely. If you plan to use a wood stove, fireplace, or portable space heater, be extremely careful and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Have your furnace system and vents inspected by a qualified technician to confirm they are functioning properly.
- Check batteries in your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.
- Keep an emergency kit in your home that includes nonperishable food, water, flashlights, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, extra medicine, and baby items, if necessary.

Prepare your car

- Make sure your tires have enough tread and check the air pressure for winter driving.
- Keep your gas tank full to prevent ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Replace your windshield-wiper fluid with a wintertime mixture.
- Check antifreeze levels and have the radiator system serviced.
- Equip your car with an emergency kit that includes water, snacks, first-aid kit, blankets, flashlight, extra batteries, portable cell phone charger, and emergency flares.



Prepare your family

- Check the air temperature and wind-chill factor before engaging in outdoor activities.
- When participating in outdoor recreation, take a buddy and carry a cell phone.
- Dress in layers of light and warm clothing. Keep your feet, hands, and head well covered.
- Avoid overexertion when engaging in outdoor tasks, such as shoveling snow. Take breaks when you feel tired or strained.
- If you have pets, bring them indoors. When outside, provide shelter to keep them warm and make sure they have water.
- Sprinkle cat litter or sand on icy patches.
- Be prepared for an emergency. Know the signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Seek emergency help right away if signs persist.

Taking preventive action is your best defense against extreme cold-weather conditions. By preparing for winter emergencies, and by observing safety precautions, you can reduce the risk of weather-related health problems. For more winter tips, visit the CDC website.

Orange Cranberry Overnight Oats

This is the best make-ahead breakfast for the busy holiday season, and is bursting with seasonal orange, cranberry, and pecan flavors!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ¾ cup milk of choice
- ¼ cup fresh squeezed orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 2 teaspoons chia seed
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans

Directions:

Place all ingredients into a jar and mix well to combine.

Place in the refrigerator, covered, for at least 3 hours or overnight. Serve cold with garnish of choice.

Notes:

If desired, add more milk before serving. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.



<https://lexiscleankitchen.com/orange-cranberry-overnight-oats/>
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/vitamin-c/>

Vitamin C

Is a glass of OJ or vitamin C tablets your go-to when the sniffles come? Loading up on this vitamin was a practice spurred by Linus Pauling in the 1970s, a double Nobel laureate and self-proclaimed champion of vitamin C who promoted daily mega doses (the amount in 12 to 24 oranges) to prevent colds and some chronic diseases.

Vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, is a water-soluble vitamin. This means that it dissolves in water and is delivered to the body's tissues but is not well stored, so it must be taken daily through food or supplements.

Vitamin C plays a role in controlling infections and healing wounds and is a powerful antioxidant that can neutralize harmful free radicals. It is needed to make collagen, a fibrous protein in connective tissue that is weaved throughout various systems in the body: nervous, immune, bone, cartilage, blood, and others.

Food Sources

Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of this vitamin.

- Citrus (oranges, kiwi, lemon, grapefruit)
- Bell peppers
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes
- Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower)

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