

## Healthy Holidays for You!

The holidays may be a source of many special memories.... And also temptation, stress, and oversize expectations may throw you a curve ball or two. How can you possibly maintain your balance through it all, let alone stay healthy?

Check out these 7 tips for a healthier holiday.

**1. Beat the bugs.** Add “flu shot” to your to-do list, unless of course you’ve already gotten it done. Also, wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds. Lots of germs can easily “leap” from hands to nose and mouth—not to mention from you to other people.

When you fly or ride a bus or train, use a disinfectant wipe on armrests, tray table and latch, air vent, and seatbelt buckle. Also, drink plenty of fluids while traveling—try for 8 ounces of water each hour. Moist airways are less susceptible to viruses and bacteria.<sup>1,2</sup>

**2. Stay active.** And by active we don’t mean just shopping or wrapping presents! At the very least, put on some holiday music and dance! This may not be the best time of year to start a new exercise routine, but don’t let exercise go by the wayside. And when flying, be sure to move around the cabin every 60 to 90 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

**3. Chill.** Don’t let holiday hysteria overwhelm you. Try a 15-minute chair massage at your local salon or airport or shopping mall massage kiosk. Along with relaxing muscles, massages may lower levels of stress hormones and boost white blood cells, which can protect against infections.<sup>1</sup>

What else calms you....? Relaxing music? Meditation? Walks in the park? Be sure to prioritize YOU in the midst of this busy time. And, it goes without saying: get plenty of sleep, which can stave off sickness. One study found that people who sleep at least eight hours a night are three times less likely to catch a cold than those who sleep less than seven.<sup>1</sup>

**4. Handle food wisely.** Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods. Make sure to cook foods to the right temperature and don’t leave perishables out for more than two hours.<sup>2</sup>

**5. Head ‘em off at the pass.** Are temptations lurking around every corner? Pack healthy snacks, such as fruit, nuts, or low-fat string cheese. And provide healthier options such as vegetable dishes at holiday gatherings. Granted, these foods may not have the same appeal as mom’s pecan pie or candied potatoes, but they may keep you from *overindulging*. Whatever you do, don’t “save up” your calories for big parties and family meals. That can simply lead to overeating.<sup>3</sup>

If you are cooking for family and friends consider having a diabetic or low sodium friendly item. It’s just another way to ensure everyone can rave about your cooking.



**6. Ease up.** Sure, we know 'tis the season to imbibe. But that doesn't mean you have to go overboard. Before drinking any alcohol, be sure to have something to eat. Alcohol may react negatively to your medications. Consider serving juice or flavored water for a healthy alternative.

**7. Check your meds—and vitamins.** Check your supply of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, and vitamins. I can go over this list with you. Make sure you have what you need before traveling. We can help you with solutions to remember to take your drugs or to order refills—*before* you run out.

We wish you a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

*Nothing herein constitutes medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, or is a substitute for professional advice. You should always seek the advice of your physician or other medical professional if you have questions or concerns about a medical condition.*

## Sources

1. Health: "10 Ways to Stay Healthy During the Holidays." Available at: <http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20648861,00.html> Accessed on 11-3-16.
2. CDC: "Holiday Health and Safety Tips." Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/> Accessed on 11-3-16.
3. HealthDay: "Around the World, Holidays Bring Added Pounds." Available at: [https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory\\_161093.html](https://medlineplus.gov/news/fullstory_161093.html) Accessed on 11-3-16.