

# Make *Yours* Healthy Choices!

## De-Stress Your Holiday Season!



The holidays should revolve around the *inner* things and seen as a time when we can relax our bodies, calm our minds, and refresh our souls. Society would have us focus almost exclusively on the *outer* things. Instead of encouraging us to do less, society begs us to do more.

This year can be different! You can decide to take charge of each and every element of the holiday. Make a conscious decision to focus on thoughtfulness, relaxation and balance.

Here are important tips on how you can make this your *best* holiday ever!

**Less is More.** Have everyone make a list of what they want to see, do or experience. Then have them cut their list in half.

**Make a “Things to Do” list to keep you organized.**

**Get plenty of sleep.** Fatigue can lead to stress, overeating, alcohol abuse and numerous family problems.

Note: This information is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not to replace it. Talk to your doctor if you have any health care concerns.

**Let go of family traditions that are too much work or simplify them.** For example, if you usually make a big dinner after tree decorating, try spreading a checkered cloth on the floor and have a picnic—forget the 5 course meal!

**Avoid family tug of wars.** Try to avoid the determination to see both sides of the family over the holiday. Instead, extend your holiday season so your visits will be meaningful instead of rushed.

**If you live alone,** or are recently divorced or widowed, make special plans (e.g., holiday vacation) so you won't feel isolated.



**Another holiday stressor can be money and shopping. Here are a few survival tips to keep you calm, cool and collected.**

**Make a budget and stick to it.** Make a list of people you are buying for and approximately how much you want to spend for each gift.

**Leave charge cards at home.** If you must use them, do not charge more than you can pay at the end of the month. When you find yourself nearing your budget,

take a break and allow yourself time to regroup.

**Shop alone** so you won't be distracted from your gift list and budget. To avoid crowds, shop in the early morning or dinnertime when others are less likely to be out shopping.

**Bring along a book** or some thing else to keep you occupied while you wait in long lines.

**Shop when you are well-rested and well-fed.** You can make very expensive shopping mistakes when you are tired or hungry.

**Decline department stores' “generous” offers** to delay payments until February or March—this makes it too easy to get in over your head.

**Draw names** and put a dollar limit on gifts if you have a large circle of family and friends.

**Consider giving homemade gifts.** Gifts that come from the heart are the ones people tend to remember more.

**Get at least 30 minutes of brisk exercise every day** to reduce stress, take the edge off your appetite, and help prevent winter blues. If you live in an area where there is little sunlight, try to get outside for at least one hour a day to help relieve SAD (seasonal affective disorder).