

HOLIDAY WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

serving the communities of West Windsor ■ Robbinsville ■ Hightstown

Handle Holiday Stress with NUTRITION



When we experience STRESS, our bodies produce more adrenaline, a stimulant which gives us extra short term energy. Too much stress can drain our supplies of essential nutrients and reduce the body's ability to absorb these nutrients efficiently. This can result in feeling weak, fatigued, and yes ... more stressed!

- Increase your intake of **VITAMIN C**, the **B VITAMINS** and **BETA CAROTENE** (from Vitamin A). The adrenal glands (which produce adrenaline) use these vitamins during episodes of physical and emotional stress. Eat a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains.



- Include more **COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES** in your diet - fruits, vegetables, peas, nuts, beans and whole grain breads, rice, cereals or pasta. Most candy, pastries, cookies and candy are **SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATES** which cause a quick surge - and quick drop - in blood sugar.
- Choose low fat **PROTEIN** foods (lean red meat, skinless chicken, low dairy products, fish), and avoid harder-to-digest processed meats, cream sauces and fried foods.
- Limit **CAFFEINE**. Like adrenaline, caffeine is a stimulant. Too much caffeine acts in the same way as stress, over-stimulating your nerves. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate, many sodas and some nonprescription pain medications.

- Limit **ALCOHOL** consumption. Alcohol is a depressant and can aggravate stress, as well as interfere with restorative dream sleep. Try drinking fresh fruit or vegetable juice, flavored seltzer or herbal tea.
- Avoid taking "megadoses" of **VITAMINS** and be careful with **HERBAL PRODUCTS**. Taking a megadose of some vitamins can actually be dangerous. Even though they are "natural", herbal supplements still affect your body like medicine. Check with your health care provider or pharmacist before using a product that claims to relieve stress.

You are *not* Superman (or Superwoman)! Set limits in terms of gift buying, decorating, cooking, entertaining and traveling. You simply cannot do everything or be everywhere at once.

Set realistic goals and expectations. Often our desire for the way things "should" be and what you "must" do make it virtually impossible to enjoy the holiday season.



HOLIDAY STRESS TIPS

- Stretch your neck, shoulder and back several times a day
- Try to spend 15 minutes outside in the sunshine every day
- Share your feelings with someone you trust - avoid people who are always angry or cranky
- Listen to soothing music
- Take a nap
- Sit quietly without any noise for 10 minutes
- Breathe slowly

SAFE HOLIDAY COOKING

Each year as many as 48 million people become sick from foodborne illness.

Holidays are a time when we cook BIG:



The BIG bird ...

Give yourself enough time to safely defrost your turkey. When correctly thawed in the refrigerator or at a

temperature of no more than 40°F (not on the counter top), an average 20 pound turkey needs two to three days to completely thaw. If not completely thawed before cooking, the outside meat will be done before the inside, and the inside will not be hot enough to kill any disease-causing bacteria.

To check a turkey for doneness, insert a food thermometer into the inner thigh area near the breast, but not touching the bone. The turkey is done when the temperature reaches 180°F. Stuffing should be at least 165°F. Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at **(800) 535-4555** with any turkey questions.

The BIG dinner ...

Traditional holiday meals often require juggling a large number of dishes. Make sure there is enough space in the refrigerator to store previously prepared items before the meal as well as any leftovers or “doggie bags” after the meal.

The BIG buffet ...

Bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes at room temperature. The **keep hot foods hot ... and cold foods cold** rule is especially important when foods are served buffet style as they stay out at room temperature longer than a sit-down meal. Perishable foods should not be left at room temperature for more than two hours including set up, eating and after dinner time. Refrigerate leftovers promptly.



Mail Order Treats

Alert the recipient that the gift is on its way when sending perishables through the mail, UPS or FedEx. Immediately open packages you receive that are labeled “keep refrigerated” to make sure that the food has arrived in a chilled state.

Homemade Gifts

Follow directions carefully if you preserve, pickle or can foods as *botulism* can be a danger when foods are improperly prepared. Homemade flavored oils



and garlic in oil mixtures can also be risky. A safer gourmet treat is flavored vinegar: its high acidity prevents the growth of dangerous bacteria.

The Raw Egg Dilemma

Raw eggs carry a risk of foodborne illness from *salmonella* bacteria. Use pasteurized egg products or serve commercially prepared eggnog - keep both refrigerated. Discourage sampling of raw dough and batter when baking. This is especially important for children, whose small bodies are more vulnerable.

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Steven Kirson
Mayor



Jill Swanson
Health Officer

Our vision is thriving and healthy communities. To achieve our vision, the Health Department is committed to providing public health services to protect, promote, assess and assure the health and safety of our residents.

HEALTHY HOLIDAY TIPS

In the hustle and bustle of holiday celebrations with family and friends, it is easy to ignore the importance of staying healthy! Stay focused during this holiday season:

STAY QUIT OVER THE HOLIDAYS!



- Stay away from alcohol. Not only does alcohol inhibit willpower, it's also a powerful "trigger" to light up while you're drinking. If you are feeling vulnerable, avoid parties where you know there will be a lot of smokers.
- Ask for help! Visit the QUITNET website at www.njquitnet.com or call the toll free hotline at (866) NJSTOPS for support.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!

- If you are a host, allow guests to pace themselves. Offer nonalcoholic drinks such as fruit punch, a "Virgin" Mary or flavored sparkling water.
- If you are a guest, set a limit for yourself or designate a non-drinking driver who will be responsible at the end of the evening.
- Exercise, fresh air, black coffee or a cold shower will not make you sober. You may feel more alert, but only time will make you a sober, safe driver.



WATCH YOUR WEIGHT!

- Only eat what you *really* like. Give yourself permission to eat your favorite holiday foods ... but in moderation. Unless you are sure there will be healthy choices at a gathering, offer to bring a fruit platter or vegetables with low fat dip.
- Have a low calorie snack (yogurt, broth or salad) before you go to a party or holiday celebration to curb your appetite. Listen to your body for fullness since overeating can ruin the experience of a wonderful meal.

REMEMBER TO EXERCISE!

- Shop 'til you drop! Park your car at the far end of the parking lot, walk up the stairs (or the escalator) instead of using the elevator. Take one last stroll around the perimeter of the mall before you go home.
- Maintain your fitness routine. Even little "nuggets" of exercise (three, 10 minute walks throughout the day) will accumulate to help maintain your fitness, prevent holiday weight gain and reduce stress.



Be TOY SMART.

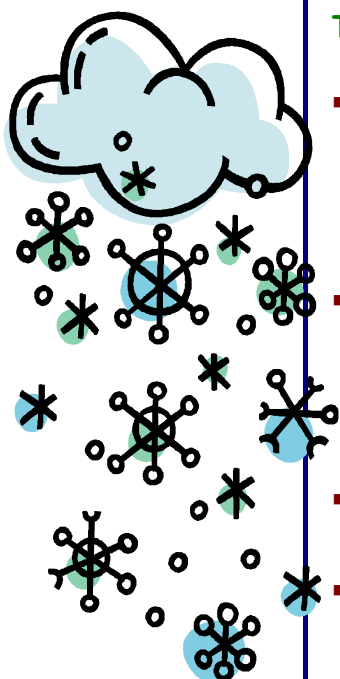
Follow these guidelines when choosing holiday gifts for young children:

- Buy age-appropriate toys. Follow the labels that say "*NOT recommended for children under*" a specified age.
- Keep toys designed for older children - chemistry sets, hobby paints and shop tools - away from younger children.
- Small toys, or small parts of toys that are easily broken or removed, can be swallowed or become stuck in a child's windpipe, ears or nose. If a toy (or one of its parts) can fit inside a toilet tissue roll, a child under three can choke on it.
- Buying a bike? All children under the age of 17 **must** wear an approved helmet at all times. Buy a helmet for your "Hot Wheeler" too and start a good habit early. It's the law!
- Check for sharp edges and points before buying a toy ... re-check as the toy ages. Even stuffed toys can have dangerous prongs and wires if they are damaged.
- Electric toys should always be used under adult supervision. Check that wires are intact and properly plugged into the outlet.

STAY SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAYS

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE FLU

- Wash hands *frequently* with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Germs spread hand-to-face so avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay 4-6 feet away from people who are sick, coughing, or sneezing.
- Get a flu shot to protect you from seasonal influenza.
- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm (or sleeve) not into your hands. If you cough or sneeze into a tissue cover both your nose and mouth.
- When you are sick, stay home... from work, school or doing errands to help prevent infecting others.



TRAVEL SMART

- **GET YOUR CAR A "CHECK-UP"** *before* the weather gets ugly. Make sure your battery is fully charged, all the lights are working and there is sufficient antifreeze in the system. Check that your tires are in good shape and your brakes are working well. Make sure your wipers work, replace worn blades and keep the washer reservoir bottle filled.
- **KEEP AN EMERGENCY KIT IN YOUR CAR** that includes a flashlight and extra batteries; ice scraper/snow brush; bottled water and nonperishable foods such as granola bars, peanut butter, crackers, dried fruit and trail mix; a sleeping bag or blanket; first aid kit and manual; cat litter or sand for tire traction.
- **FILL'ER UP!** Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up and to avoid running out of gas in a traffic jam.
- **MAXIMIZE VISIBILITY.** Clean snow off the *entire* car - hood, roof, trunk, lights and windows. Turn on the heater for a few minutes before using the defroster to prevent moisture from fogging the windshield.

REMEMBER PERSONAL SAFETY

- Don't overload yourself with packages or bags. Be willing to drop them if you are being followed or feel threatened. Be wary when strangers offer to carry your packages or groceries.
- Carry a minimum of cash in your wallet or purse. Put your cash away before you leave the teller's window. Avoid outdoor or exposed ATM machines.
- Ladies: don't hang your purse on a door hook or floor of a public restroom - keep it on your lap.

BE ALERT TO DEHYDRATION

- Thirst is not always an accurate indicator of dehydration - your body needs more fluids long before you feel thirsty.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of liquid a day such as water, seltzer, juice, herb tea or decaf coffee, soup or low fat milk.
- Since they are mild diuretics (substances that remove fluid from the body), alcohol and caffeine in coffee, tea and colas are not as helpful in reducing dehydration.