




VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute!

Eat, drink and be healthy.

It's the most wonderful time of the year. While you're busy spreading joy to family and friends, make sure you're also taking steps to stay safe and healthy during the holiday season. Here are a few tips:

- 1. Wash your hands.** Soaping and scrubbing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading germs. When you wash your hands, use soap and clean running water. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds – about the time it takes to sing *Happy Birthday* two times. If you're out and about with no sink available, rub your hands with an alcohol-based product instead.
- 2. Bundle up.** Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. So, make sure you're dressed for the weather. If you're headed outdoors to enjoy the snow or chilly air, stay warm and dry with layers of light clothing like hats, scarves and waterproof boots. 
- 3. Don't stress.** The holiday season can be a stressful time for people. But try to avoid stress if you can. Check your calendar and make sure you're not over-committed. Make a budget and try to stick with it so you don't overspend. Balance work, home and play. And, if you need positive reinforcements, ask family and friends for support.
- 4. Enjoy safe travels.** Holidays are a popular time for traveling to see family and friends. Whether you're going down the street or across the country, safety is key. Always wear your seat belt. If you feel tired while driving, take a break. And make sure any children in your car are buckled in properly, using a car or booster seat if necessary.
- 5. Cook safely.** Keep your family safe from food-related illness by following a few, simple food preparation tips. Wash your hands and the surfaces in your kitchen often. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from ready-to-eat foods. Make sure you cook foods to their correct temperature; and refrigerate perishable foods quickly. If you can't put something in the refrigerator right away, try not to leave it sitting out for more than two hours.
- 6. Make healthy choices.** It's okay to indulge in a few of your favorite seasonal treats, as long as you can find a balance. Try to make healthy choices when you can. Choose fresh fruit as a sweet substitute for candy. Pick one or two of your favorite treats, rather than indulging in "a little bit of everything." And find fun ways to stay active – dance to holiday music, play in the snow with your kids or take a walk after dinner with the family.
- 7. Avoid holiday mishaps.** Accidents do happen – even around the holidays. Use a step stool or small ladder when hanging decorations, rather than standing on furniture, which may not be as sturdy. Light candles with care and keep them away from children, pets, walkways, trees and curtains. Replace the batteries in your smoke detector and install a carbon monoxide detector if you don't already have one.
- 8. Wish your doctor "happy holidays".** Make it a healthy start to the New Year with a visit to your doctor. Schedule your regular health exam and health screenings. It's a great way to prevent disease and illness, or catch it early when treatment works best. Talk to your doctor about the vaccinations you might need, based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history and family health history. It's all about prevention and early detection.