

VitaMin

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Ten Ways to Ensure a “Stress Less” Holiday Season

The holidays can be a joyful time, giving us a chance to reconnect with friends and family. But they can also be stressful. After all, there's more money to spend, more errands to run and more things to do. But, instead of saying “humbug” to it all, think about the kinds of events that trigger stress for you during the holidays. Then you can focus on one or two things you can do to reduce your stress. Here are some ideas:

1. As early as possible, take a close look at your finances. Give yourself a budget and stick to it. Don't overspend just because “it's the holidays.”
2. Avoid mall madness and chaos by shopping online and by catalog.
3. Create a “family holiday planner” and have everyone in the house add parties and events to one calendar.
4. If you have children coming home from school, let them know the rules and regulations you expect them to follow ahead of time.
5. Split extra holiday chores and tasks with everyone in the family. Don't try to do it all yourself.
6. Set a little time aside for yourself if you can. Meditate, curl up with a book, or go for a short walk.
7. Stick to a sleep, meal and exercise schedule; and limit your alcohol. The better you take care of yourself, the better you'll deal with stressful situations.
8. Set aside some time for yourself. Give yourself a half hour here and there to curl up with a book or unwind in the bathtub.
9. If you're still feeling overwhelmed, reach out to a close family member or friend.
10. Most important, be realistic. Try not to put pressure on yourself to create the perfect holiday for your family. Focus instead on a few traditions that make the holidays special for you – and then enjoy them! ■

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Your health care needs don't always wait for the perfect time of day. But using an Emergency Room in the middle of the busy holiday season may be a waste of your time and money if the advice or care you need can be found somewhere else. For more information, call the toll-free number listed on your ID card.



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