



December 2019



Have a Safer Holiday Season This Year

Emergency room doctors say they see more injuries during the Christmas and New Year holidays. The most likely reasons:

- ◆ People are doing unusual things, like climbing a ladder to hang a decoration.
- ◆ Almost everyone is in a rush. They want to get places in a hurry and are often distracted. They may not drive cautiously, even though streets and roads are busy.
-  ◆ Shopping takes its toll. People don't usually get hurt in stores, but it can happen if they don't watch for wet spots by the door. If they buy more things than they can comfortably carry, people may not be able to see well, which means they may bump into things or step off of curbs and fall because they can't see the street.
- ◆ Backs get a workout. People are more likely to lift a heavy box without help. They move furniture or shovel snow, and they may do these things incorrectly because they are preoccupied or in a hurry.
- ◆ People get tired and are less alert toward the end of the holiday months.
- ◆ Both adults and kids are handling new things, and that can be hazardous.

Think about your plans for the holidays and allow enough time to do what you need to do. Be aware of your circumstances, and get enough rest so you can celebrate in comfort and safety.

The Hidden Benefits of Chewing Gum

Let's get this out of the way: Chewing gum in public or on the telephone is rude. Really rude. Don't do it.



But in private? Well there might be some benefits, especially if you choose sugar-free gum.

- ◆ A new study shows that chewing gum can help people stay focused longer on tasks that require steady monitoring. It can also improve concentration in visual memory tasks.
- ◆ A Cardiff University study, published in the British Journal of Psychology, found that gum chewers had quicker reaction times, more accurate results, and longer concentration.
- ◆ In 2009, researchers found that gum chewing increased blood flow to the brain, which may be the reason for increased alertness in gum chewers.

Sugary gum is bad for the teeth, but sugar-free varieties can help limit plaque buildup and clean teeth, if you absolutely can't brush, researchers said.



Americans Still Love Christmas

Christmas is still a favorite holiday in America.

Nine in 10 Americans celebrate Christmas.

For Christians, it is still a major holiday, with 95 percent of Christians celebrating it.

Far fewer Americans observe it as a religious day, in which they celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, or Jesus the Savior. Just 46 percent of Americans say they keep Christmas as a religious, rather than a public, holiday.

Still, 66 percent believe the Christmas story is an actual historic event.





National Cookie Day - December 4th



We can thank the Dutch for more than windmills and tulips. The English word "cookie" is derived from the Dutch word "koekie" meaning *little cake*.

There have been cookie-like hard wafers in existence for as long as baking has been documented. This is because they traveled well. However, they were usually not sweet enough to be considered cookies by modern day standards.

The origin of the cookie appears to begin in Persia in the 7th century, soon after the use of sugar became common in the region.

- ◆ They were then spread to Europe through the Muslim conquest of Spain.
- ◆ Cookies were common at all levels of society throughout Europe by the 14th century, from the royal cuisine to the street vendors.
- ◆ Cookies arrived in America in the 1600 hundreds. Macaroons and gingerbread cookies were among the popular early American cookies.
- ◆ In most English-speaking countries outside of North America, the most common word for cookie is "biscuit." In some regions the terms cookies and biscuits are both used.



Cookies are classified into different categories, with the most common ones being: Bar cookies, Drop cookies, Filled cookies, Molded cookies, No-bake cookies, Pressed cookies, Refrigerator cookies, Rolled cookies and Sandwich cookies.

How to observe the day: Pick up some cookies at your local bakery or bake some using your favorite recipes. And remember to share them with your family and friends!

Factors That Contribute to Memory Decline - And Ways to Counter It

Some memory declines have nothing to do with aging and are completely reversible. Certain other factors can be the cause, according to the American Psychological Association, including:

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| * Anxiety | * Dehydration | * Psychological Stress |
| * Depression | * Infections | * Substance Abuse |
| * Medication | * Poor nutrition | * Thyroid Imbalance |

Regardless of the cause, a variety of memory aids can help. And the most common memory aids among seniors include lists and routines.

A routine: Always putting your meds next to the coffee pot. Always putting the keys in your purse.

Lists: To-Do lists, either electronic or written, can be added to routines. For example, always put the to-do list on the kitchen table and refer to it often.

Other strategies: Take your time. Try to establish a simple, tidy living arrangement.



Power Strip is Basic for Holiday Lighting Schemes

Experts on safety tell us not to overload circuits at Christmas time, but they don't tell us how. The solution to overloading is the power strip.

Born of computer users' need for many electrical connections, the power strip can have six or more outlets. There's no need to stack cords on a single wall outlet. The power strip has a circuit breaker that will turn it off, preventing a fire.



But it does more. Put the power strip on the floor, and you can turn on decorations with a touch of your foot. Gone are the days when you had to crawl behind the tree to plug them in.

The strips work just as well for outdoor decorations, but should be protected from rain and snow. Placing the strip in a plastic bag or under a wooden box works very well.