

# HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

Issue 12 • De-Stress During the Holidays



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## *To Do List* Eat Well and Save at the Grocery Store

When you plan ahead for your weekly meals, you can make sure you include enough foods from each food group. Pay special attention to serving enough fruits and veggies, for example. Planning ahead also helps you save money. If you plan your grocery list before you hit the store, you'll know what you have on hand and what you need. Also, shopping from a list helps you avoid expensive impulse purchases.

Compare the cost of convenience foods with the same foods made from scratch. Convenience foods are products such as packaged baked goods, frozen meals and vegetables with seasonings and sauces. Most of these cost more than similar foods prepared at home. Also you can use less fat, salt and sugar in foods made at home.

Try store brands. They usually cost less than name brands but they taste as good and typically have the same nutritional value.

—Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

## Health Update

# Study: Pets are Good for Our Mental Health

Pets can serve as important sources of social and emotional support for “everyday people,” not just individuals facing significant health challenges, according to research published by the American Psychological Association. And, the study found, pet owners were just as close to key people in their lives as to their animals, indicating no evidence that relationships with pets came at the expense of relationships with other people, or that people relied more on pets when their human social support was poorer.

Psychologists at Miami University and Saint Louis University conducted experiments to examine the potential benefits of pet ownership. “We observed evidence that pet owners fared better, both

in terms of well-being outcomes and individual differences, than non-owners on several dimensions,” says lead researcher Allen R. McConnell, Ph.D., of Miami University in Ohio. “Specifically, pet owners had greater self-esteem, were more physically fit, tended to be less lonely, were more conscientious, were more extroverted, tended to be less fearful and tended to be less preoccupied than non-owners.”

—Source: American Psychological Association





## Holidays Got You Frazzled? De-Stress With Our Tips

The holidays are here! More things to do, people to see and places to go. These activities might be fun, but they can also be stressful. To make this holiday season a happy and peaceful one, look for healthy ways to manage stress.

The media often portrays the holiday season as trouble-free, twinkly and festive. But family problems may escalate when the season arrives. The reality of the holidays, much like life, is that real people and families aren't perfect. If you can change your expectations just a bit so you don't expect the holidays to be like they are in the movies, you may have a more enjoyable experience.

Do your best to stick with your regular family routine. Changing your schedule to fit in holiday activities and traveling can be tough on you and your kids, so try to keep things as normal as possible. Try to keep bedtimes and mealtimes the same even when you're way from home. Talk with your family about schedules. Take time to explain each day's activities to your children and let them know what to expect.

Talk with your family about finances. Even young children can learn how to budget for gifts. Urge them to get creative and make presents for family members instead of buying them. Receiving a thoughtful gift from a child can be a memorable moment that lasts a lifetime. Many families reduce stress and expenses by concentrating on special things they can make or do for each other.

Take time to relax. It's important to have some down time to help you cope with holiday stress. Take a few moments to read a book, take a bubble bath, or sit down and listen to your favorite songs. You may also want to play a board game with your family, go for a walk to see holiday displays in your neighborhood or settle down for a story time. Pull out holiday stories that you loved as a child and read them together.

Be adaptable and flexible. You can help yourself and your children relax and enjoy the holidays for what they truly are: a time of joy, celebration, and peace with friends and family.

—Source: Dartmouth University; U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

### Healthy Eating Holiday Recipes: Clean Them Up With a Few Simple Swaps

There are many ways that you can modify your favorite holiday desserts to reduce the fat and calories but still keep the flavor and texture. Try these ideas:

- **Fruit puree:** Substitute an equal amount of fruit puree, such as applesauce, for oil in cake, brownie, bread or muffin mixes. The fruit adds flavor, moisture and tenderness to baked goods when the oil is omitted.
- **Egg whites or egg substitute:** Replace some of the whole eggs in a recipe with egg whites or a commercial egg substitute. 1 egg = 2 egg whites or ¼ cup of egg substitute.

—Source: University of California, Los Angeles' Student Nutrition Awareness Campaign



## Washing Your Hands Is as Easy as Singing “Happy Birthday”

Does it really matter how long you spend washing your hands or exactly how I do it? Yep, it matters. Getting your hands clean is important for protecting yourself against harmful bacteria and viruses that can make you sick. Fortunately, there’s an easy way to know that you’re doing it right. Just follow these simple steps:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
- Scrub hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Washing your hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. Antibacterial soap doesn’t kill all bacteria, and it may help lead to resistant bacteria. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on your hands, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs. Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy. To apply a hand sanitizer, apply the product to the palm of one hand. (Read the label to learn the correct amount.) Rub your hands together. Then rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.



### *What's Happening at the Pharmacy?*

## “Child-Resistant” Packaging Doesn't Always Mean “Child-Proof”

In the U.S. more than two million possible poisonings are reported to poison-control centers each year, with approximately 90 percent happening in the home. The majority of those reported are unintentional poisonings involving children who have ingested a medication or a poisonous household cleaner or other substance.

Children are curious and like to imitate adults. They learn very quickly how to open products by watching adults. The mistake people make is thinking that child-resistant specialty packaging is childproof.

Child-resistant packaging should not be the first line of defense to prevent unintentional poisonings from happening. It should be the last. There is a reason it is called child-resistant, rather than childproof: Some children will be able to open it. For this reason, experts caution people to lock up all medicine and hazardous material out of the reach of children. Never rely solely on child-resistant packaging.

For a poison emergency in the U.S., call 800-222-1222 for the American Association of Poison Control Centers. You will be automatically routed to a poison control center in your area.

—Sources: Upstate New York Poison Center; American Association of Poison Control Centers



Health Q&A

## How To Avoid Food Poisoning During Holiday Cooking

**Q:** I'm confused about temperatures when it comes to safely cooking meats for our upcoming holiday meal. What are the guidelines?

**A:** It takes thorough cooking to kill harmful bacteria, so you're taking chances when you eat meat, poultry, fish or eggs that are raw or only partly cooked. When cooking meat, use a thermometer to check that it's cooked all the way through.

- Cook hamburgers and ground beef mixtures such as meatloaf to 160°F; ground poultry to 165°F.
- Beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts and chops may be cooked to 145°F; all cuts of fresh pork, 160°F.
- Whole poultry should reach 180°F in the thigh; breasts, 170°F.
- Fish is done when it flakes with a fork.

- Salmonella, a bacteria that causes food poisoning, can grow inside fresh, unbroken eggs. Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm, not runny. Scramble eggs to a firm texture. Don't use recipes in which eggs remain raw or only partially cooked.
- When you cook ahead, divide large portions of food into small, shallow containers for refrigeration. This ensures safe, rapid cooling.
- Clean raw-meat preparation surfaces after use, and never cross contaminate with tools or bowls that have touched raw meat.

—Source: Vermont Department of Health

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## Your Diet Holiday Parties? Here's Help

When you are managing diabetes, navigating holiday parties can be challenging. But you don't have to miss out on the fun! Plan to eat a small, balanced meal or snack before you leave home. If you arrive at the party hungry, you're more likely to overindulge. Study all of your food options at the party and think about what you will have before you put anything on your plate. Decide which foods are worth eating and which can be ignored. Then stick to that decision. Remember to regularly check your blood sugar throughout the holidays. Adding a few extra checks on a party day may help guide your choices.

—Sources: American Association of Diabetes Educators



Do you have more questions?  
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for more information.



## Did You Know...?

You don't have to be afraid of "carbs." Carbohydrates (carbs) are the body's main source of fuel for energy. You don't have to limit all carbs to lose weight. There are two main types of carbs: simple carbs (sugars) and complex carbs (starches and fiber). Foods that are high in complex carbs — such as fruit, veggies and whole grains — provide a healthy supply of fiber, minerals and vitamins. But simple carbs from cake, candy, cookies and sugar-sweetened deserts and drinks (including alcohol) have many calories and few nutrients.

Government dietary guidelines advise eating plenty of unrefined grains, such as brown rice and whole wheat bread, cereal and pasta. They also suggest that fruit and veggies should make up half of what is on your plate. Remember to balance your fruits, veggies and grains with lean protein and dairy, too.

To lose weight, don't get all hung up on carbs. Just reduce the number of calories you take in and increase the amount of physical exercise you do each day. Create a healthy eating plan that mixes carbs, fat and protein.

—Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## Get Fit

# Give Yourself the Gift of Better Health This Holiday Season

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) offers these tips on how to stay fit and avoid the typical weight gain and stress associated with the holiday season.

**Take Time For Yourself** — Although spending time with friends and family is essential, it's also important to carve out some relaxation time for yourself. Try practicing deep breathing and taking a few minutes to relax when you feel stressed.

**Set Realistic Exercise Goals** — Aim to exercise 30 minutes a day instead of an hour. If more convenient, divide your exercise into 10-minute intervals throughout the day.

**Enlist The Support Of A Friend Or Family Member** — Walking and talking with a friend can be a great way to socialize, burn extra calories and reduce your stress level. Having a physical activity "buddy" will help you stick to your exercise goals.

**Create New, More Active Traditions** — Instead of throwing a dessert or cocktail party, try ice-skating or Nordic walking or another fun outdoor activity as an alternate holiday event. Play powder puff football or build a snowman.

**Drink Plenty Of Water** — Although the cold weather may make you less inclined to grab a glass of water, it is just as important in the winter as it is during the summer. Water helps counter the dehydrating effects of travel or drinking alcoholic beverages. It may also help satisfy your appetite, since thirst is often mistaken for hunger.

**Set Realistic Expectations For Holidays And Enjoy The Imperfections** — Setting unrealistic demands on yourself for the perfect party, perfect decorations or the perfect way to spend the holidays will add to your holiday stress and may set you up for disappointment.

**Make Exercise A Priority** — Try to exercise first thing in the morning before other demands sidetrack you. Individuals with an early morning exercise routine tend to be more consistent when pressed for time.

—Sources: National Wellness Institute; Swarthmore College; American Council on Exercise



## Hormones and Blood Glucose Levels: What's the Connection?

Hormone fluctuations, whether they're tied to your monthly cycle or to menopause, can affect how you manage your diabetes through medication. Changes in your hormone levels before, during and after your menstrual cycle can affect your blood glucose levels. Talk with your doctor about how to adjust your diabetes medicines and your meal plan to keep your blood glucose levels on target.

As you start to go into menopause, swings in hormone levels also can lead to swings in blood glucose levels, as well. Changes in hormone levels with menopause can cause these levels to lower. You may need lower doses of your diabetes medicine. Talk with your healthcare provider about how these fluctuating hormone levels can affect your diabetes management.

—Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health

## Living with Diabetes Managing Diabetes While Traveling

Are you planning a trip for the holidays? You'll want to do a bit of planning ahead to best manage your diabetes. Have a medical exam to make sure your diabetes is in good control. Schedule the exam with enough time to work on your control before you depart. Before any trip, get two papers from your doctor: a letter and a prescription. The letter should explain what you need to do for your diabetes, such as take pills or insulin shots. It should list insulin, syringes, and any other medications or devices you use. The letter should also list any allergies you have or any foods or medications to which you are sensitive.

The prescription should be for insulin or diabetes pills. You should take along more than enough insulin and syringes or pills to last through the trip. But the prescription may help in case of emergency.

—Source: American Diabetes Association

## Diet During Pregnancy Affects Diabetes Risk for Offspring Later in Life

As more Americans are diagnosed with obesity and type 2 diabetes, several studies have connected conditions in the womb to future metabolic effects. A pregnant woman's nutrition and exposure to toxins during critical phases of fetal development can lead to poorer long-term health outcomes in adult offspring.

In a study published in *Endocrinology*, researchers showed that a high-fat diet during pregnancy and lactation sets up offspring to suffer more substantial

negative effects when fed a high-fat diet later in adulthood. They examined two groups of mice. One group was exposed to a high-fat diet in utero and during lactation, and the other was exposed to a normal diet during those stages. When the animals reached adulthood, the researchers switched both groups to a high-fat diet. Mice that had been exposed to a high-fat diet in utero and during lactation were more susceptible to the effects of the high-fat diet as adults.

—Sources: American Diabetes Association



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## Stay Healthy During the Holiday Frenzy

The holidays are one time of the year when you really want to feel your best. But they're also chock full of health woes, from cold and flu bugs to overdoing the holiday cheer. Your local *Good Neighbor Pharmacy* has the products you need to stay healthy—and merry—as you shop, travel, and celebrate.



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