

HOLIDAYS DON'T HAVE TO BE STRESSFUL

# vitaMin

Vital health information in a minute!

## Don't stress about the holidays

The holidays can be a great time to reconnect with friends and family, but they can also be hectic and stressful. It doesn't have to be that way. Try these suggestions for a more enjoyable holiday season.

### Getting ready

- **Know your spending limit.** Set a budget and don't spend more than you've planned. It's okay to tell your child that a certain toy costs too much. Don't buy gifts you'll spend the rest of the year trying to pay off.
- **Get organized.** Make lists or use a calendar to keep track of tasks to do and events to attend.
- **Share the load.** You don't have to do everything yourself. Share tasks like decorating, wrapping gifts and preparing the holiday meal. Does the house really have to look like a picture in a magazine? Cut yourself some slack if you can't get every last thing done.
- **It's okay to say "no"** to some events and make time for the events that are most important to you. You don't have to squeeze everything in before the New Year.
- **Be realistic.** You are not responsible for creating the perfect holiday for your whole family, and family problems really don't take a holiday. If there is ONE thing a family member must have to make the holiday perfect, make them responsible for that item.
- **Set limits.** If being around your relatives is stressful, it's okay to set limits on your time at events and visits.

### During the holidays

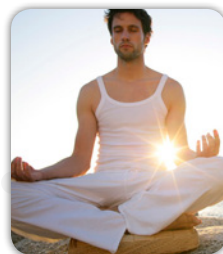
Plan ahead for how you will respond to the most stressful times.

- **Pay attention to your own needs.** Spend some time by yourself if you can. Go for a walk, take a yoga class or do some relaxation breathing. Leave some unplanned time to relax and spend time with family without the stress of a schedule. And ask others for help with chores!
- **Take care of yourself.** Keep a regular sleep, meal and exercise schedule, and limit your alcohol. Set your priorities and some realistic goals.
- **Get support if you need it.** Holidays can be especially hard if you have experienced the recent death of a loved one or the breakup of a relationship. Talk with your doctor about counseling and medicine if you are feeling sad and blue. Think about doing something different from the routine, like taking a vacation with a family member or friend.

### Know when you are stressed

A wise person said, "Don't sweat the small stuff." Signs of stress can include feeling impatient, worried, cranky or even depressed. You might experience sleep or appetite disturbances, muscle tension, headache, fatigue or stomach aches. Children can also feel the sense of urgency that makes for more stress.

- Focus on what you can do to help reduce stress. Simplify.
- Let go of unrealistic expectations, particularly the desire for perfection.
- Invest your energies wisely.



Source: WebMD®



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