



# Good for You!

## Here's to a Healthy Season!

Crowded shopping centers, visits with relatives, and the pressure of preparing holiday meals can all summon one universal reaction: stress. The holidays may be the season of love and celebration, but sometimes festivities can become overwhelming.

Help keep your seasonal stress to a minimum this year with the following advice:

- **Set realistic expectations.**

Sometimes, expectations for family get-togethers are too high and result in disappointment and frustration. Accept your family members and friends as they are and set aside grievances for a more appropriate time.

- **Focus on health.**

Keeping your body healthy will help the season stay bright. Remember the basics – handwashing, safe food handling, adequate sleep, and healthful meals – to keep illness off of your to-do list.

- **Take a 15 minute break.**

Fifteen minutes of “alone time” may be just what you need to refresh yourself. Try taking a brisk walk around the block. Exercise is a great stress reliever, and a daily dose of winter sunlight can dramatically improve your mood.

- **Shop without anxiety.** Remember that it's the thought that counts. Don't let competitiveness, guilt and perfectionism send you on too many shopping trips. Create a holiday shopping budget and stick to it, so the holiday bills don't linger into the new year.

- **Ask for help.** Getting your family and friends involved in the holiday preparations may lower the stress of doing it all on your own.

- **Put it all in perspective.** Think about what the holiday really means to you and your family: whether it's time together, religious observance or reflection on your life and future goals – let these aspects of the holidays keep things in perspective.

Adapted from: *'Tis the Season: Fall/Winter Health Tips from NY-Presbyterian Hospital*



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## Chase Away the Winter Blahs

Gloomy days and fewer hours of daylight may lead to winter blahs, but this common condition can be easily avoided.

**Stay active.** When you keep busy with something worthwhile, you are less likely to feel confined by the cold and snowy weather. Begin by identifying a number of indoor projects you have intended to tackle. Choose jobs that will give you a sense of accomplishment or satisfaction once completed. Or take up a new hobby. Winter is a great time to explore options you have not previously considered. The key is to keep your mind active and engaged.

**Catch up with your friendships.** Communicating with others on the phone or through email can make you feel less isolated. If the weather isn't too threatening, invite close neighbors over for coffee, a snack, or a simple meal. Lively conversations and good food can help reduce the gloom of winter.

**Physical Activity.** It is tempting to sit around or sleep longer than you should on short, gloomy days. Regular exercise gives you greater resistance to stress, anxiety, and fatigue, while improving the condition of your heart and lungs. Indoor malls and community buildings are great places to walk. Ask a friend to join you. Check out local fitness facilities or exercise classes.

Adapted from: *Keep Away the Winter Blahs* Rachel Schwarzendruber, University of Illinois Extension



## Enjoy Seasonal Produce

Fall brings its own color wheel of seasonal fruits and vegetables. Deep colors like oranges, reds, and purples are especially prominent in the cooler months. However, it's important to strive for variety with your fall favorites. Try to eat a rainbow of colors. Don't just have a green salad; add all different colors into the salad. More colors usually means there is good nutritional value in your meal.

The autumn months bring additional health and nutritional challenges. The shorter, colder days can

make it harder to get physical activity outdoors. And there are the looming (and calorie-packed) temptations of party snacks, holiday refreshments and memorable meals. However, one good way to avoid those extra seasonal pounds is to keep eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Buying seasonal produce may also add zest and flavor to your meals. Fruits and vegetables that are in season are typically fresher and more flavorful. However, some canned or frozen fruits and vegetables can be just as healthy and satisfying. Some people think frozen or canned vegetables lack nutritional value, but they are usually processed at the peak of harvest and provide nutritional value which is similar to fresh produce. To learn more about fall and winter produce, go to:

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>

Adapted from: *Seasonal Produce - Fall and Winter* [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

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