



Holiday Health and Safety Tips



The holidays are a time to celebrate, give thanks, and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health. Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips.

Wash your hands often. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

Eat healthy, and be active. With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy. Select just one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to your favorite holiday music. Be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.

Manage stress. The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep a check on overcommitment and overspending. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep.

Travel safely. Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to his/her height, weight, and age.

Get check-ups and vaccinations. Exams and screenings can help find potential problems before they start. They can also help find health issues early, when the chances for treatment and cure are often times better. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for a yearly exam. Ask what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history, and family health history.

Watch the kids and grandkids. Children are at high risk for injuries. Keep a watchful eye on your kids when they're eating and playing. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards (like coins and hard candy), and other objects out of kids' reach. Learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking. Make sure toys are used properly. Develop and reinforce rules about acceptable and safe behaviors, including electronic media.

Prevent injuries. Injuries can occur anywhere and some often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations. Leave the fireworks to the professionals. Wear a bicycle helmet to help prevent head injuries. Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or skateboarding to help prevent head injuries. Keep vaccinations up-to-date.

Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees, and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves, or candles unattended. Don't use generators, grills, or other gasoline- or charcoal-burning devices inside your home or garage. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test them once a month, and replace batteries twice a year.

Handle and prepare food safely. As you prepare holiday meals, and any meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Some content has been adapted for space. Full article at: <http://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday/>

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