



The Human Resource Solution Center

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Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at IMA of Colorado.

# Holiday Stress: Healthy Eating

*Learn to manage your stress and make healthy choices*

Thanksgiving. Christmas. New Year's Eve. The holidays bring to mind thoughts of family, friends, fun, and *food*. Each year, millions of Americans struggle to maintain their waistlines during the holidays while being surrounded by tempting holiday treats.

## Holiday Parties

By following the healthy tips below, you'll be on your way to enjoying all your holiday parties, while also staying in control of your eating. For example:

- Don't leave the house on an empty stomach - it promotes overeating.
- Steer clear of the food table - a surefire way to overindulge.
- Make socializing your top priority - conversation will keep you occupied and away from the food.
- Limit your drinking - alcohol increases hunger and lowers will power.
- Offer a low-calorie alternative - if you've volunteered to bring a dessert, bring fruit rather than a cheesecake.
- Listen to your stomach - reduce your portion sizes and stop eating when you feel satisfied rather than stuffed.

## Cooking and Baking

If you're the one hosting, use it to your advantage. It puts you in control of what will be served. For example, substitute high-fat or calorie-laden ingredients with more healthy choices such as using an egg substitute rather than a whole egg.

There can also be a downfall when it comes to hosting — the temptation to sample the food while you're preparing it. To help you resist the urge to snack while cooking:

- Keep your mouth occupied with a mint flavored gum or sip tea to reduce your urge to sample while you cook.
- Prepare foods on a full stomach. You won't be as tempted to sample what you're making.

## Cocktails and Beverages

Before you reach for the eggnog, remember, some mixed drinks

may have as many calories as a dessert. It's okay to indulge in some holiday spirits but keep the following suggestions in mind:

- Pace yourself - drink water or seltzer between drinks. The more you drink the more the temptation to snack increases.
- Order mixers with diet or club soda whenever possible.



## Enjoy the holidays...

But don't abandon health habits or feel pressured to eat and drink more than usual just because it's the holidays. If you get plenty of sleep, exercise, and try to plan what you'll eat ahead of time, you can make it through the holidays feeling satisfied and in control!

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# Holiday Stress: Traveling

## *Tips to help manage the stress of holiday traveling*

The holiday season accounts for nearly 10 percent of all miles traveled by Americans during the entire year. Planes are overbooked, highways are overcrowded, making most of us hardly overflowing with holiday cheer.

### **Keep Your Sanity**

Don't let travel worries ruin your holiday plans, learn to manage your stress with a little planning.

For starters, try using some of the following tips—they can help you have a happy holiday season, and keep control of your sanity during the trip.

If you're flying:

- **Do not delay!** Make your reservations well in advance to make sure you have your choice of flight times and seats.
- **Choose your ticket wisely!** Travel on off-peak days and during early morning hours whenever possible. Airports tend to be less crowded during these times, which will make it easier to get another reservation in case your flight is cancelled.
- **Call to confirm your flight is still on time before leaving for the airport!** Delayed or canceled flights are a major cause of holiday stress, so call ahead of time to confirm it's on time.

- **Stay hydrated!** Drink at least eight ounces of water every hour. It will help with jet lag and other health concerns.
- **Pack Wisely!** Keep prescriptions, glasses, and other overnight basics in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost.
- **Fight boredom!** Pack quiet activities to help pass the time, especially if you're traveling with children.

If you're driving:

- **Be Prepared!** Have a professional mechanic examine your vehicle before you leave. Also, be sure to pack emergency and first aid kits in case of a breakdown.
- **Know your route!** Get out your map and plot out your best route before leaving. [Mapquest](#) can be a helpful resource for this.
- **Watch your time!** Plan to do most of your driving during non-rush hour times to avoid the holiday rush.

- **Take a break!** Rest about every two hours and limit yourself to an eight-hour driving day. Stop at rest areas so you can walk around and stretch out.
- **Lay off the caffeine!** Drink plenty of water and eat balanced meals. It will help you to feel better once you reach your destination.
- **Wear safety belts at all times!** They are the single most effective means of reducing fatal and non-fatal traffic injuries.

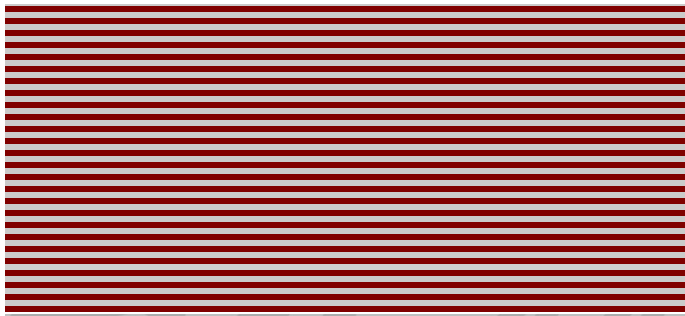


### **Did you know...**

Traveling during the holidays is a stressful undertaking. Long check-in lines, cramped car seats, and unpredictable weather can make you dread your favorite holiday. But, with a few precautions, you can get to your destination without losing your mind (or your luggage).

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# Holiday Stress: Work Parties

## *Your office party questions answered*

For many employees, the annual holiday work party is one more special event we need to work into our hectic holiday calendars. However, this event should be looked forward to and enjoyed, not cause undue stress. So when the invitation arrives, make sure you know the answers to these key questions:

### **Do I have to go?**

The party is part of your job - its purpose is to bring together co-workers and colleagues for camaraderie and well-deserved recognition. Consider it work, put on your best attitude, and go.

### **Do I need to know who will be there?**

The event requires advance preparation; knowing who will be there and having an idea what to talk about is critical to a successful experience.

### **How long should I stay?**

Stay long enough to speak to everyone there. With a large crowd, interact with as many people as possible, especially the key people like your boss. Remain at the event for at least an hour, but leave before the party time has elapsed.

### **What should I wear?**

It's your company party - keep your guard up when deciding how to dress. If immediately after work, business attire is appropriate. If later in the evening, or during the weekend, your choices will vary depending on the event. What you wear should reflect well on you professionally.

### **Is my family invited?**

Check your invitation - only take children if the invitation reads "and family". Unless your spouse is mentioned - or the envelope is addressed to you "and guest" - only you should attend.

### **What should I talk about?**

It's not what you have to say; it's about what other people have to say - allow others to talk; plan ahead with some good open-ended questions.

### **How much should I eat and drink?**

Keep moderation in mind - you are there for fellowship - resist

the urge to overfill your plate or glass. Drink in moderation - this is an opportunity to build business relationships and promote yourself.

### **Should I take a gift?**

Unless you are asked to bring something to exchange with co-workers, the only appropriate gift is one for your host. Gift baskets with jams, jellies or gourmet food items that can be stored and served later are the best choices.

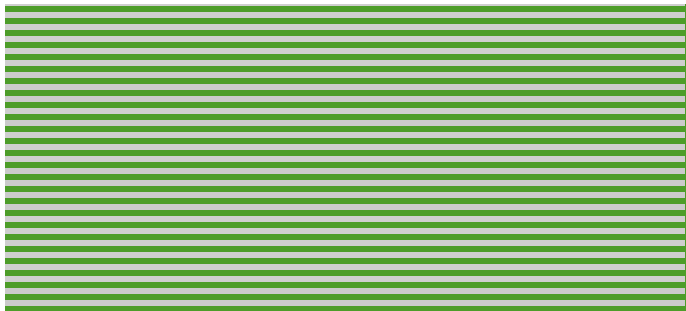
### **Can I let loose?**

Enjoy yourself, but keep in mind that it's still about business. Don't behave carelessly or do or say things you may regret later.



## **Be thankful...**

Be sure to thank the host of your holiday party, as well as any of the people who worked to plan the event. No festive occasion comes off without hard work, and it's a task that often gets overlooked.



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# Holiday Stress: Sticking to your Budget

## Tips on how to manage holiday finances

Money problems are the leading cause of holiday stress for Americans according to a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA).

### Stress-free Holiday Budgeting Tactics

The best holiday budget began last year—smart shoppers write the holiday gift season into each month’s budget, and they buy presents here and there throughout the year.

However, if you’re like most, you haven’t planned a head and could find yourself living a little tight in January. But don’t despair, with proper budgeting and a handful of smart shopping ideas, it is possible to find the perfect gift for everyone on your list, and stay within your budget.

Here are a few tips to help you stick to your holiday budget and help manage your holiday financial stress:

- **Make a list and check it twice!** Revisit your shopping list, does everyone listed on it truly need to be there?
- **Set limits!** Write down a maximum dollar limit for everyone, and then track how much you actually spend.

- **Buy in bulk!** Have something on hand for those unexpected presents. A case of wine, elegant candles, or a tin of homemade cookies are great ideas.
- **Be realistic!** Ask yourself, can you really afford it? Do you have the cash for it? A good rule of thumb is to leave the credit cards at home and if you don’t have the cash for it, don’t buy it.
- **Trim your expenses!** Can you make some presents yourself, participate in a gift exchange, or only buy for the kids? Look into your options.
- **Shop online!** With gas prices high, consider staying home and shopping online instead. Most retailers will waive shipping fees during the holidays.
- **Get ready for next year!** Remind yourself that next year you plan to buy gifts

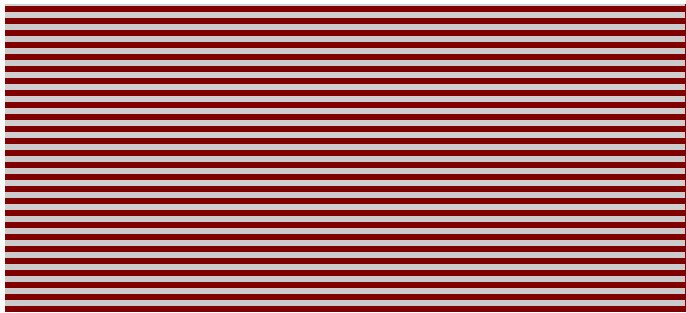
throughout the year, rather than during the holiday rush. For starters, take advantage of some of the post-holiday sales and get a few people crossed off your list early on.

- **Get a holiday job!** Even with a good budget, the extra holiday shopping can pinch the pocket book. You could look into getting a seasonal job. Retailers hired 800,000 people for holiday work last year.



### Did you know...

A nationwide survey done in early November by the American Psychological Association (APA), found that 61 percent of respondents listed lack of money as their top source of holiday stress, followed by the pressures of gift giving, and credit card debt.



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# Drinking and Driving

*Be responsible this holiday season!*

It's the holiday season – a time to celebrate with family, friends, and co-workers. If you'll be celebrating the season with alcohol, these tips will help you drink responsibly to stay safe this holiday season.

## Designate a Driver

Of course, the safest choice when driving is not to drink at all. But if you plan to drink, have a designated driver. This is someone who agrees not to drink and is responsible to drive you and other partygoers home.

According to National Commission Against Drunk Driving (NCADD), someone dies in an alcohol-related traffic accident in the U.S. every 30 minutes, and more than a million drivers are arrested annually for driving under the influence. While not just limited to the holiday season, extra parties and more people traveling on the roadways mean these incidences spike at this time of the year. Designate a driver for safety's sake.

## How Much is Too Much?

If you choose to drink responsibly, how do you know if you're overdoing it? Use the simple one-to-one rule: have one

standard drink per hour. The American Dietetic Association defines a standard drink as:

- One 12-ounce beer
- One 5-ounce glass of wine
- One mixed drink with 1.5 ounces of liquor

Remember, personal tolerances vary, so it's up to you to know your safe limit and stick to it!

## Be a Smart Party Host

If hosting a party, you don't need to serve alcohol to make your party merry. From sparkling punches to mulled cider, there are many festive, non-alcoholic beverages to offer your guests.

If serving alcohol, always measure the amount of alcohol mixed into drinks and punches so guests can gauge how much they are consuming. And stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends.

If someone overindulges, it's your responsibility as the host to not

let your guests drink and drive. Arrange for a ride with a safe driver, or make them stay until they sober up.

## Alcohol & Drugs Don't Mix

Prescription drugs or over-the-counter remedies, such as cold medications, when combined with drinking may affect your driving. Follow the directions and warning labels of all medications carefully.

And contrary to popular belief, black coffee, a cold shower, or fresh air may make a person feel more awake, but they will not overcome the effects of alcohol.



## Did you know...

During the holiday season and throughout the year, drinking responsibly is simple: if you drive, don't drink; if you drink, don't drive. Your safety, and the safety of others on the road, depends on your good judgment.