

Staying Healthy During the Holidays

By Julie Donley, RN ~ Success Expert & Author of [Does Change have to be so H.A.R.D.?](#)



The holiday season means more parties, more shopping, more eating, more stress, and, of course, more colds and flu! So how can you stay healthy during this busy time?

There are several things that you can do to practice self-care. The holidays are not an invitation to lose focus on what is most important in your life. Here is a short list to keep you focused on maintaining your health - and still have fun!

1) WASH YOUR HANDS! This is the one, best thing you can do regularly to avoid getting sick. Use a disinfectant gel. This is the simplest and easiest way to keep germs away.

2) Get a flu shot. Stop into any pharmacy today and get yours. No excuses. If you are around people, you are susceptible. If you have kids, that doubles your chances of getting sick. Prevention is the best medicine.

3) Take your vitamins. If you take vitamin C and E and a multi, that is great. If you eat healthy fruits and vegetables, you may choose not to take vitamins, however, in the winter months, adding extra C to your diet can be helpful.

4) Don't overeat. Gaining weight over the holidays does not have to be the norm. It is not healthy for your body to yo-yo in weight. It adds extra effort to your heart and other vital organs. Overeating feels bad. Your clothes tighten and that causes stress. You worry about the gain and how you'll get it off then in January you are stressed about losing it. It's a horrible thing to do to your body. Eat modestly. Eat slowly. Be conscious. Don't just pick; use a plate and choose your food wisely. Enjoy yourself, just be sensible about it.

5) Drink plenty of fluids. Water is best. It keeps your body well hydrated to flush germs out of your system. Dehydration creates a fertile environment for sickness. And watch your level of alcohol intake. Sweet drinks can add hundreds of calories to your daily intake and cause your weight to fluctuate wildly. Alcohol also dulls your senses. Again, be sensible. And of course, don't drink and drive!

6) Get proper rest. Sleep is underrated but it is SO important for good health, creativity and clear thinking. When you're tired, you are not as alert and more easily agitated. To keep stress at bay, make sure you are sleeping enough. Most people require 8 hours but some need more and some can go with a little less. This may mean saying 'no' so some of your invitations but you are the priority. If you're exhausted, it's easier to catch a cold. Your body will have rest, even if it has to force you to get some!

7) Work with a budget. I mean, really, when I listen to the stories of what people spend and how they go out of their way to get every person that comes in contact with them, their kids or some member of their family some gift or tip, it makes my head swim! No one expects anything! If they receive something, they are thankful, but there is no reason to go into debt in order to 'look good'. Most of the time, the gifts are not needed anyway. Ask a teacher how many trinkets and broaches they have received over the years and I guarantee they will roll their eyes and laugh. Give from your heart as opposed to your checkbook and do what FEELS GOOD FOR YOU. Let



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the rest go. By being prudent with your hard-earned money, you respect yourself and experience less stress in the New Year when you look over your bills and find that you are not in loads of debt from overspending. You might even find that you have extra money to take that cruise you have always wanted.

8) Think 'JOY' this holiday season. In other words, if it's a chore, if you are miserable doing something, then consider not doing it. Often, you put such pressure on yourself to be everything to everyone and to do everything perfectly. You are so concerned about being judged harshly when, in fact, it is you who judge yourself harshly. No one else cares nearly as much as you worry they do. If you are enjoying yourself, then go for it. But if it brings you unhappiness, makes you feel uncomfortable or stressed, then just don't do it. Focus on pleasing you and bringing yourself joy; that will be what pleases others.

9) Find ways to de-stress. There are many ways you add stress to your life during the holidays. Therefore, it's essential to add little things that will help you to relax. Schedule some down time into your week. Get a manicure. Purchase food rather than cook it all yourself. Give yourself permission to not do everything. You can also say 'no' or delegate certain tasks to others. Remember, much of your stress comes from YOU! No one else expects so much of you. You are your own worst enemy! NOW is the time to be good to you. After all, the holidays are to be enjoyed. Create a wonderful holiday memory as opposed to a stressed-out one.

10) Exercise in spite of the time crunch. If you think you have no time to work out, you are making it too hard. 15 minutes is all you need every day to get your body moving. Dance while listening to music or run in place. If you have a machine that you use as a clothes hanger, move the clothes and hop on while chatting with your spouse or watching TV. 'Time' is a lame excuse given the health benefits. A little time today will save you time later when your body starts to break down and give you pain because you do not have the muscle tone or strength needed to do your activities of daily living. Exercise offers you clarity of thought, increases your energy and boosts your metabolism. It strengthens your heart and helps aid digestion. It also helps you to unwind and de-stress. Exercise is not a nice-to-do; it really is a need-to-do all year round.

Have a healthy and joyful holiday season!

Julie Donley, RN BSN MBA is a psychiatric nurse, success expert and author of several empowering and motivating books including [Does Change have to be so H.A.R.D.?](#) and [The Journey Called YOU: A Roadmap to Self-Discovery and Acceptance](#). Her masterful coaching style and expertise inspires you to be your personal best and feel good about yourself as you navigate through life's challenges. Contact Julie@JulieDonley.com for a personal consultation. For self-help resources, to purchase her books and to subscribe for inspirational articles, visit www.JulieDonley.com and be your best today!

