



## **Heart-Healthy Tips: Managing Holiday Stress**

The holidays are a time of celebration, full of visits with friends and family, trips across town or cross-country, and an abundance of festive sights and sounds. All that festivity can lead to major holiday stress, though, when schedules get packed, finances get tight, and tensions rise. Keep your holiday season joyful with these tips to manage holiday stress.

- ▶ Do your best to stick to your regular family routine. Changing your schedule to fit in holiday activities and traveling can be tough on you and your kids, so try to keep things as normal as possible. Try to keep bedtimes and mealtimes the same even when you're away from home.
- ▶ Talk with your family about finances. Even young children can learn how to budget for gifts. Urge them to get creative and make presents for family members instead of buying them. Receiving a thoughtful gift from a child can be a memorable holiday moment. Many families concentrate on special things they can make or do for each other.
- ▶ Plan quiet time or at least down time from activities. Take a few moments to read a book, take a bubble bath, or sit down and listen to your favorite songs.
- ▶ Play a board game with your family.
- ▶ Go for a walk with your family and/or friends to see holiday displays in your neighborhood.
- ▶ Remember to exercise. If you choose something outdoors, the fresh air and exercise can lift your spirits.
- ▶ Settle down for storytime with your family. Pull out holiday stories that you loved as a child and read them aloud together.
- ▶ Carve out a few hours to volunteer at a local charity. You'll get a boost from helping someone in need, and the charity with benefit from your help!
- ▶ Don't let unexpected events ruin the holidays for you. Be adaptable and flexible. More than likely, you'll laugh when reflecting on this at next year's holiday celebration.

*Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Family Guide*