

HEALTHY WAYS TO GET THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

As the holiday season approaches, many of us will be faced with parties, family get-togethers, travel, shopping, decorating, cooking, and house guests! This can create a minefield of health hazards, including hangovers, over spending, over eating, exhaustion, dehydration, depression, and stressful relationships.

Here are a few tips for staying healthy, wealthy, and happy during this celebratory time:

1. **Don't overspend!!** I cannot stress this enough! This can add so much unwanted and needless stress for months, and possibly years, to come. Have a budget, use cash and not credit cards – most importantly, stick to your budget!
2. **Say no.** All too often we feel we must attend every party or event or give some grand explanation as to why we cannot attend. In reality, we can just say 'no, thank you' and give ourselves a break.
3. **Give back.** Spend some time this year volunteering in your community and get the whole family involved. Nothing feels as good as helping others in need.
4. **Have realistic expectations** or, better yet, NO expectations. We can set ourselves up for disappointment and resentment by having expectations for how a holiday should go or what gift we should receive.
5. **Don't overindulge!** This has to be the biggest complaint I hear every year: "I gained so much weight over the holidays!" Plan a family walk before and after meals, play games, make only one dessert, use dairy-free alternatives for gravies and additives, serve fruit-infused waters and teas instead of alcohol and coffee, and skip the bread. The way to avoid unwanted weight gain is to limit or avoid alcohol, skip the desserts, avoid heavy gravies and breads, leave butter or salt out of food, and portion control! Load up on fruits and veggies and offer a vegan option at your holiday party this year.
6. **Exercise!** One of the best stress relievers is a good cardio workout. Walk, run, kickbox, yoga, spin class, or Zumba your way through the holidays! This is also a great way to battle seasonal depression and burn off unwanted calories.
7. **Hydrate!** 68% of us are walking around dehydrated, which causes depression, lethargy, headaches, irritability, joint pain, back aches, and insomnia. DRINK WATER!!! The rule to follow is to drink 50% of your body weight in ounces daily. Example: 140 lb/2 = 70 ounces of water daily.
8. **Don't take life too seriously!** Laugh! Laugh at the things that irritate you or at your passive aggressive mother-in-law. Forgive your family and friends for their shortcomings and let go of control.

Above all, be happy and enjoy the gift of life!