



## Holiday Health and Safety Tips

Holidays are meant to be spent with family and friends, not in the waiting room of an emergency room. We reached out to experts for some tips to avoid common holiday medical emergencies. Here are some suggestions:

**Traveling:** 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.

**Decorations:** If you have small children or pets keep decorations like hanging lights or glassware out of their reach—even some seasonal plants like poinsettias and mistletoe can be toxic if ingested.

**Children:** Make sure your child is wearing proper protective equipment like helmets and gloves if they are doing any winter sports or activities. If they are going out to play in the snow, make sure they wear multiple layers and insulated, waterproof coats and pants.

**Fire Safety:** Be sure to keep trees well-watered and away from heat sources like air vents, burning candles and fireplaces.

## Express Gratitude

Do you ever feel stuck, unsatisfied and unfulfilled? If so, you may want to try expressing gratitude. Being gracious for all that you have while appreciating others can have a big impact on your well-being and increase feelings of happiness. This can reduce stress and negative emotions. Plus, you may feel more confident and satisfied with your life. Try these tips to help you cultivate gratitude:

- **Keep a gratitude journal.** Whether handwritten or digital, keeping a journal of all of the positives in your life can help foster a sense of gratitude.
- **Compliment someone.** Saying something nice to at least one person a day can make them and you feel good. At the same time, if someone compliments you, accept it sincerely with a smile and thank you—avoid brushing it off.
- **Give to those in need.** Volunteer at a soup kitchen, donate food, send care packages to hospital patients, or visit an eldercare facility. You'll improve someone else's day and your own!
- **Make gratitude a daily habit.** Every day, write down three things you are grateful for and one thing that you'll do for someone else. Making this a daily habit yields great results!
- **Don't dwell on the negative.** When life hands you lemons, make lemonade! Turning a negative experience into a positive experience can help you grow and learn to appreciate each experience for what it is—an opportunity to learn.



## Stay Calm This Holiday



Despite the merriment of the holiday season, many people find that the demands of cooking, guests, decorating, gift buying, and financial pressures leaves them exhausted and irritable. By managing unrealistic expectations, it's possible to keep stress in check so you can truly enjoy the holidays. Try these tips:

- **Focus on what's doable, drop the rest.** Cooking a large dinner can be an undue strain, especially if you're juggling work and taking care of kids or elderly loved ones. Opt for a potluck or a low-key gathering with shared appetizers. If you need help with any festivities, delegate... and don't expect perfection!
- **Don't go over budget.** Spending "more" on gifts or decorations doesn't necessarily enhance joy. Pay cash when you can. Or limit credit card spending to what you can pay off in 2-3 months.
- **Avoid unresolved family disputes.** Not all family get-togethers fit the ideal image. Plan to keep everyone positive and redirected to shared activities like a concert, play or sporting event.
- **Slow the rush.** Remember, taking personal time outs enhances enjoyment. A half hour of exercise at least three days a week can help reduce anxiety, improve sleep and mood.

## National Handwashing Awareness Week - December 4th - 10th

### Practice proper handwashing to prevent disease

Washing your hands may seem like a trivial part of your day, but it is actually very important. Having clean hands may help prevent you from getting sick and spreading germs to other people. There are many diseases and health conditions that can be spread by not washing your hands or not washing them properly. The common cold, Salmonella, E.coli, norovirus, respiratory infections and hand-foot-mouth disease can all be spread by not washing your hands, not washing them well enough or not washing them when you really should be. Read on to learn more information about properly washing your hands!

#### Examples of when you should wash your hands

##### Always wash your hands **before**:

- Preparing food
- Eating a snack or meal
- Feeding a baby, child or someone else
- Caring for someone who is ill
- Treating a cut, wound or burn

##### Always wash your hands **during**:

- Food preparation
- Cleaning up after eating
- An illness, cold or infection

##### Always wash your hands **after**:

- Using the bathroom
- Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Changing diapers or cleaning up after a child who has used the toilet
- Petting an animal,
- Touching pet food, pet treats
- Cleaning up animal waste
- Touching garbage

#### Wash your hands properly with these easy steps!

1. Wet your hands with water
2. Apply soap
3. Rub your hands together to create a lather
4. Continue rubbing until the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails have all come in contact with the soap. **You should do this for at least 20 seconds.**
5. Rinse your hands under running water
6. Dry your hands

#### Don't rely on hand sanitizer!

While hand sanitizers come in handy when you're unable to access soap and water, they do not get rid of all of the germs.

