

Holiday Depression and Stress

The holidays are associated with joy, cheer, family, and friends. However, the holidays can be a very stressful and depressing time of year for many people, which are sometimes referred to as the “holiday blues”. For some it is a time of loneliness, self-evaluation, and anxiety about an uncertain future. These feelings can be brought on by financial constraints, unrealistic expectations, stress, fatigue, and inability to be with one’s family and friends. This can cause depression, overeating, headaches, excessive drinking, and difficulty sleeping.



Follow these tips for coping with stress and depression during the holidays:



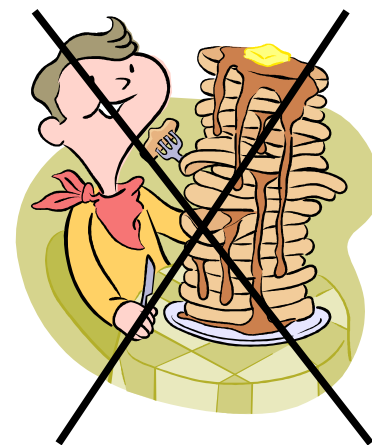
- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable
- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely
- Leave “yesteryear” in the past and look toward the future
- Do something for someone else
- Enjoy activities that are free
- Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression
- Try something new
- Spend time with supportive and caring people
- Save time for yourself!

For more information visit the National Mental Health Association at <http://www.nmha.org>.

Healthy Holiday Eating

Delicious holiday desserts and treats can be very tempting and can lead to overeating if you are not careful. Follow these tips for healthy holiday eating:

1. Pay attention to portion sizes and only select one or two of your favorite foods.
2. Limit your intake of foods high in fat or added sugar.
3. Substitute festive bowls of fresh fruit instead of candy.
4. Eat your leftover meats in a salad or with vegetables.
5. Overcome the urge to overeat—avoid temptations.



For more information, visit the Center For Disease Control and Prevention Website at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5ADay/tips/holiday_tips.htm.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Pertussis, otherwise known as whooping cough, is a disease caused by bacteria. It causes severe spells of coughing which can interfere with drinking, eating, and breathing. This can lead to pneumonia, convulsions, inflammation of the brain, and sometimes death. Pertussis is most dangerous in infants less than one year old, but all ages can get it.



This disease is spread through the air after an infected person coughs or sneezes and other people breathe in infected droplets. Pertussis begins like a cold with symptoms of an irritating cough and runny nose. Within one to two weeks, the cough develops into coughing fits, which are a series of violent coughs during which the victim struggles for breath. A high-pitched whooping sound follows the cough when the victim is gasping for air. Usually the coughing fits occur more frequently at night and are often followed by vomiting. Adults, teens, and vaccinated children may have milder symptoms. Without treatment, an infected person can spread the disease from the time he or she starts coughing through 21 days after the start of the cough. After five days of treatment with an appropriate antibiotic, an infected person cannot spread the disease.

Pertussis may be prevented through routine immunization. It is important to remember to cover your mouth when you cough, wash your hands frequently, and stay away from others when they are coughing. If you think you may have Pertussis or have been exposed to someone who has Pertussis, it is important to visit your physician as soon as possible.

For more information, visit the Iowa Department of Public Health's website at www.idph.state.ia.us.

Protect Yourself and Others from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

More than 500 people in the United States die every year from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. This is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death when breathed. Carbon monoxide can be found in combustion fumes, stoves, generators, lanterns, gas ranges, and burning charcoal and wood. When a person breathes in the carbon monoxide in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, the result may be illness or death. The most common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, weakness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Follow these tips to protect yourself and others from carbon monoxide poisoning.



1. Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home and check its battery regularly.
2. Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage
3. Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window or door where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area; and never run it inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the door or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented.
4. Never use an oven or gas range to heat a home.
5. Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.

For more information, visit the Center For Disease Control and Prevention Website at www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.asp.

Visit www.scottcountyiowa.com/health or call 563.326.8618 for more information from the Scott County Health Department