

# 'Tis the Season

## FOR STRESS AND DEPRESSION?

The holiday season can be a time of great joy, togetherness, and celebration. For some people, however, the holidays are marked by loneliness, self-evaluation, and regret. Holiday stress and depression are often a result of common triggers such as family conflicts or the absence of loved ones, financial pressure and overspending, and an increase in physical demands including socializing, shopping, and cooking. In some cases, simply anticipating triggers and taking action to manage holiday stress and depression can help to minimize or eliminate their symptoms.

### COPING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS AND DEPRESSION

- ❄️ Keep expectations realistic. Your family and circumstances may change from year to year. Start new traditions if you are unable to celebrate as you did in the past.
- ❄️ Acknowledge feelings of sadness. If you have recently experienced a loss or are far away from family and friends, allow yourself to feel grief or sadness.
- ❄️ To combat feelings of loneliness, consider volunteering in your community. Volunteering is a good way to prevent isolation, meet potential friends, and boost spirits.
- ❄️ Create a budget to avoid overspending. Consider initiating a family gift exchange, and participate in free holiday activities such as community concerts or viewing holiday decorations.
- ❄️ Seek out caring and supportive friends or family members to spend time with during the season.
- ❄️ Plan and organize. Making lists, prioritizing activities, and planning menus in advance can help prevent last minute errands.
- ❄️ Maintain healthy habits. Skipping exercise or failing to get an adequate amount of sleep can increase feelings of stress. Additionally, try not to overindulge in food and drink, which can also lead to feelings of stress. Eat healthy portions of healthy foods and refrain from drinking alcohol in excess.
- ❄️ Make time to recharge. Spend time doing something that is relaxing to you such as listening to music, reading, or taking a warm bath.

### PROFESSIONAL HELP IS AVAILABLE

For many people, recognizing triggers and taking steps to cope in healthy ways can minimize holiday stress and depression. However, sometimes feelings of stress, depression and anxiety persist despite these efforts. If these feelings last for several weeks or you experience sleeplessness, physical ailments, irritability, hopelessness, or an inability to function in day-to-day life, consult your physician or a mental health professional since you may be experiencing depression. It is important to note that, once identified, depression is highly treatable.

*If feelings of stress or depression persist beyond the holiday season, contact a mental health professional.*



# Can't Shake the Holiday Blues?

Many people find themselves unusually depressed during the fall and winter months. Is it holiday stress? Often the answer is yes. However, if feelings of depression persist, it may be a case of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)—a mood disorder characterized by recurring feelings of depression during winter months when there is less daylight. Unlike clinical depression, symptoms of SAD subside during spring and summer months.

*For more information, call Pam Coleman, RN,  
Employer Relations Manager, at 803-395-2527.*

