

Staying Sane And Healthy Through The Holidays

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The holiday season can be a time of joy, excitement, and connection for some, while others would rather skip the time of year that is most stressful and depressing for them. If you're ready to thrive versus just survive this holiday season, try implementing some of the suggestions below!

Don't overlook small items-When you are ready to jump start a positive shift, start with realistic and sustainable modifications. Drop any expectations of perfection as this is impossible to achieve and a discouraging setup for failure. Drastic changes can seem over whelming, yet adding in a few basic additions can be powerful, especially when they are integrated into a daily lifestyle over time.

- Eat protein with every snack/meal to stabilize mood and blood sugars while preventing weight gain or sugar cravings.
- Move your body every day, even if it's for 10 minutes. Walk outside while talking on the phone. Have a dance party with your kids. Use an exercise ball for your office chair. Lift some weights or jump on a rebounder while you're watching TV. Plan a hike for a social outing instead of a sedentary happy hour.
- Say "no" to the roll and sweetened beverage if you know you'll be enjoying dessert too.
- Take a series of deep abdominal breaths at every stop light.
- Use one power word (ex. "peace", "strength", "success", "hope") and repeat it to yourself during challenging times of doubt or worry.
- Practice saying "no" to additional tasks that are not top priorities.
- Gratitude reframing can be done in times of high stress to shift your thinking.
 - Example-"I have so much to do." → "My life is filled with exciting opportunities."

Step away and look at the snow globe/Focus on the big picture-What, where, and who are your priorities? Do your actions match how you spend your time and money? The holiday season can put pressure on people to spend, give, go, and do. Are you doing things because you want to and feel fulfilled or are you making choices out of guilt and external influences? Think back to previous holidays-do you remember how people made you feel and the emotions associated with the events, or what each person gave you for a present?

If the holidays leave you feeling exhausted, empty, and stressed, perhaps it's time to re-evaluate how your time and energy is spent and focus on what is most important to you. When times are stressful, take a few deep breaths and ask yourself what is really important in the big picture, not just today, but in years to come.

Give yourself the gift of sleep-If you are getting less than 7 hours of sleep a night, you are setting yourself up for additional challenges. Your body reacts to limited sleep by increasing hormones that increase appetite and decreasing hormones that affect satiety meaning you are more likely to have hunger cravings, overindulgence, and reach for foods that increase dopamine such as sugary carbs.

When we're tired, we are more likely to be irritable and less likely to exercise which is a double negative for our natural endorphins which contribute to feelings of euphoria and happiness. Caffeine is often a drug of choice to combat fatigue, but it actually perpetuates the cycle as caffeine can affect sleep for up to 12 hours after consumption and can deplete our adrenals leading to chronic or severe fatigue.

Be inhospitable to uninvited guests-We may all have a family member equivalent to "Uncle Eddie", but in this case, I am referring to your body being a temple of health where bacteria, viruses, and other microbes don't feel welcome. This includes healthy digestive flora (ask your physician if a supplemental probiotic may be indicated for you) to overpopulate the beneficial bacteria in comparison to the pathogenic bacteria or yeast. Having a healthy internal terrain is affected by what we eat, think, breathe, drink, and do. We encounter microbes on a daily basis, but the ability of your body to defend and protect itself is largely up to you.

Eating sugar has been shown to deplete your immune system for 6-8 hours, which can be a contributing factor to increased illness through the holiday season with the stereotypical increase of sugary treats. There are many safe and effective ways to protect or treat against influenza, sinus infections, colds, and respiratory concerns. Ask your naturopathic physicians for more information on what may be best for you.

An effective medicine you can make in your own kitchen to protect against a variety of microbes is listed below. This critter killer can be consumed for prevention or treatment, with food, as tolerated.

- "Anti-plague remedy"- Equal parts fresh **raw garlic, onion, peeled horseradish root, apple cider vinegar**. If desired, add cayenne, peeled turmeric root and/or peeled ginger root. Blend into a paste with blender or food processor. Place in a glass container and store in refrigerator for days/weeks. Eat 1-2 T at a time 1-4x/day on a cracker, in veggies, hummus, salsa, marinara sauce, or straight off the spoon. **Ideally eaten raw.**

Stuffing is a side dish, not a healthy emotional practice-Since many people don't want to talk about the events that are traumatic for them, they will often suppress, ignore, or struggle through life without moving past the guilt, sadness, anger, or fear. When emotions are stuffed, they will resurface in time, either physically or emotionally.

Homeopathic medicines can be a powerful tool to help heal on a physical and emotional level, leading to more balanced, stable, and desired responses. Think about being protected by a marshmallow suit; you may encounter triggering situations, yet things roll off easier making you less consumed or affected and better

able to respond versus react. Patients find that grief becomes less raw, fear is minimized or eliminated, and they often report feeling more peaceful, happy, and stable overall when a correct and individualized homeopathic medicine is prescribed.

Cheers to a happy and health holiday season and beyond! For more information on how you can thrive with optimal health, call 480-767-7119 to set up your free 10 min. consult or new patient appointment.