



PLAINVILLE-SOUTHINGTON REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT

Main Office
196 NORTH MAIN STREET
SOUTHINGTON, CT 06489

Satellite Office
ONE CENTRAL SQUARE
PLAINVILLE, CT 06062

860-276-6275 • FAX 860-276-6277 • pshd.org
SHANE LOCKWOOD, M.P.H., R.S.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



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CONTACT: SHANE LOCKWOOD, 860-276-6275

How to Cope With Holiday Stress

Tips Offered by PSHD

The holiday season is upon us. The time of year for shopping, baking, decorating, partying and entertaining. The time of year where people everywhere are happy and jolly, right? Wrong! For many people, the holiday season is anything but jolly. It brings an array of emotions for everyone and may trigger sadness, loneliness, stress, and depression.

“The holiday season is the time for some to reflect on the year (where they have been and where they are going),” said Shane Lockwood, PSHD Director of Health. “For others, it’s the time to remember loved ones who have passed away. The holiday season can bring out many emotions, such as happiness and joy, but it can also trigger depression and stress.”

To ensure a healthy holiday season, one must minimize the stress that accompanies it.

PSHD offers tips on how to help you cope with the holiday stress.

- Be realistic. The holidays don’t need to be perfect. Things change and so do traditions. Find ways to create new ones.

- Acknowledge your feelings. The holidays are particularly hard for those who lost loved ones. It is okay to feel sad and to cry. Focus on the good times you had with your loved ones.
- Get out and socialize. If you feel isolated or lonely reach out to your community. Participate in religious groups and attend community social events (tree lighting ceremonies, holiday boutiques). This can offer support and companionship.
- Stick to a budget. Know your budget before going shopping for food and gifts and stick to it. Don't try to buy happiness.
- Plan ahead. Set time aside for when you plan to go shopping, visiting with friends, etc. This will help to prevent last minute stress.
- Learn to say no! There is a lot going on at the holiday time. It is okay to say no to parties, luncheons, etc. You don't need to participate in every activity or event that you are invited to.
- Exercise regularly. Overindulgence adds to your stress and guilt. Don't go overboard on sweets, cheese, or alcoholic beverages. Get plenty of sleep and physical activity.
- Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't overindulge during the holidays. This only adds to your stress and guilt.
- Take some time for yourself. Spending 15 minutes alone without distractions may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do.
- Seek professional help if you need it. Despite your best efforts you may find yourself persistently sad or anxious. If these feelings last for a while talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

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The mission of the Plainville Southington Health District is to preserve, protect, promote, and improve the quality of life in a healthy environment through the prevention of disease, ongoing health education opportunities and the enhancement of the well-being of its residents.