December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Every day, 36 people in the United States die, and approximately 700 more are injured, in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.

This December, during National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (3D Month), consider what you and your community can do to make injuries and deaths from impaired driving less of a threat.

The Problem

- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.
- In 2008, approximately 14,000 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third (32%) of all traffic-related deaths in the United States.
- In one year, over 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This accounts for less than 1% of the 159 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.
- Alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost about $51 billion a year.

Protect Yourself and Your Family and Friends

During the holiday season, and year-round, take steps to make sure that you and everyone you celebrate with avoids driving under the influence of alcohol. Following these tips from NHTSA can help you stay safe:

- Plan ahead. Always designate a non-drinking driver before any holiday party or celebration begins.
- Take the keys. Do not let a friend drive if they are impaired.
- Be a helpful host. If you’re hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.
Holiday Stress
By Chris Woolston (www.ahealthyme.com)

Dashing to the mall, in a run-down Chevrolet. Into debt we fall, for the 10th straight holiday. Bill and Bob and Kate, arrive on the next flight. Why can't they go to a Super 8 'stead of crashing here tonight?

--To the tune "Jingle Bells"

Are your holidays full of sleigh bells, good cheer, warm gingerbread, and Peace on Earth? If so, it may be time to turn off the Claymation television special and wake up to reality. For most people, the holidays include too much time fighting traffic, overloading credit cards, entertaining relatives, and feigning excitement over brand-new, beautifully wrapped Salad Shooters. It's the season when you're expected to cram office parties, shopping, and family gatherings into your already busy life. In short, the holidays mean stress.

Unless you happen to dwell in Bedford Falls circa 1950, the Hallmark version of the holidays is probably out of reach. But don't despair: It's not too late to put a little sanity back into the season. Here are some tips to help you cope with -- or even avoid -- holiday stress.

Tips for coping

• Stay out of holiday debt. Know your spending limit. If your local mall starts putting up holiday decorations before you're done paying last year's bills, it's time to rethink your gift-giving habits. Expensive gifts won't guarantee a happy holiday. The recipient just might feel guilty instead of elated, especially if the gift isn't really wanted. Even children will be grateful for moderately priced gifts that are chosen with care, especially if you explain that you don't have unlimited funds. If your extended family is filling your shopping list to the brim, consider starting a name exchange. There's a good chance everyone else on the list will appreciate a break, too.

• Make a shopping list, and check it twice. Staying organized will help you avoid any oversights or last-minute panic. As a bonus, you'll be less likely to make any impulse purchases that you can't really afford.

• Avoid a relative meltdown. If everybody in your family gets along, consider yourself lucky. The holidays give you a great opportunity to spend time together. But if your family is full of conflict and friction, the holidays can become a battlefield. You can clear the atmosphere by involving everyone in the planning and decision making. When a couple of relatives insist on sniping at one another, take it as your cue to go for a walk or tidy up a distant room. If the worst fights tend to happen at the dining room table, consider having your holiday meal at a nice restaurant where everyone is more likely to be on their best behavior.

• Go easy on alcohol. A stiff glass of eggnog can be a fine way to toast the holiday, but don't go overboard. Too much alcohol will only add to your stress. You may say or do things that you'll later regret, and you're bound to feel lousy the next day.

• Keep moving. Exercise is always a great stress reliever. Instead of watching that Christmas special for the hundredth time, take a brisk walk around the neighborhood with a cousin or slip away with your aunt to the gym for a much-needed break. Even if you get your workout on a treadmill, try to spend some time outdoors. A little winter sunlight can dramatically brighten your mood, especially if you suffer from seasonal affective disorder, depression that sets in as the days get shorter.

• Eat well and be merry. That fourth or fifth sugar cookie won't lift your spirits. As hard as it may seem, you can hold onto your healthy eating habits throughout the holiday season. Have a few
Holiday Stress cont’d.

healthy snacks throughout the day, especially before the Big Meal. If you catch yourself eating to relieve anxiety or loneliness, take a step back from the kitchen and think about the source of your feelings. Confronting your emotions in a healthy way can keep you from overeating.

- **Don’t get too ambitious.** Planning on an elaborate craft project with the kids? Keep in mind that a gingerbread mansion would be just as much fun in January. Are you in charge of making a seven-course holiday meal? Ask for lots of help, and don't hesitate to cut it down to four courses. If you’re wrapping presents, ask your kids to help out.

**Simplify the season**

- **Take a moment to appreciate the simple things.** Getting into the holiday spirit can be as easy as putting on nostalgic holiday tunes or making your favorite wintertime drink.
- **Stay flexible.** Too many people approach the holidays with a fixed vision of how everything should go. This year, try to keep an open mind. Ask other people what they really want to do and try to accommodate them. You might find that you actually enjoy staying home and playing board games instead of driving around town and looking at the lights.
- **If you’re traveling, give yourself plenty of time to get there.** This is especially important if you’re traveling with small children. Remember to bring all the toys and supplies you need to keep them occupied if you hit a jam. Whether you’re on the road or in the airport, realize that everyone else is in the same predicament. Slow down, take a deep breath, and try to be courteous to the driver or fellow traveler around you.
- **Rein in your expectations.** No holiday in the history of civilization has ever gone perfectly. Spills and squabbles and unwanted gifts are just a part of the season. Don't hold yourself or anyone else up to an unrealistic standard. Just take it all in, relax, have fun, and remember that the holiday season only comes around once a year.

-- Chris Woolston, MS, is a health and medical writer with a master’s degree in biology. He is a contributing editor at Consumer Health Interactive, and was a staff writer at Hippocrates, a magazine for physicians. His reporting on occupational health for CHI earned him an award from the Northern California Society of Professional Journalists.

**Wellness - Yoga Classes**

It’s a good time to add something different to your regular exercise routine. Yoga will improve your flexibility, decrease your stress, improve your circulation, and prevent injuries. Anyone can do it as there are modifications for all levels.

**Classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:15 to 6:30 in the auditorium of the Biomedical Research Center.**

**The cost is $30.00 for 8 sessions and the sessions must be used within 60 days from the date of purchase. Come by for one free class to get you started. This is an ongoing class that can be started at any time.**

All you need to get started is a yoga mat which can be purchased at Wal-Mart or Target, and comfy clothes. If interested please call 7293 for more details.
Top 10 Holiday Diet Tips of All Time

By Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD
WebMD Weight Loss Clinic-Feature (http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/top-10-holiday-diet-tips-of-all-time)

Holidays bring family and friends together to celebrate traditions and spread good cheer. They also bring lots of opportunities for socializing, eating, and drinking. Even the most disciplined people struggle with temptation during the holiday season.

To navigate the party landmines with your healthy diet intact, you need a strategy. Experts agree: Having a plan in place will help you handle night after night of eating and drinking.

"Think of your appetite as an expense account, and figure out how much you want to spend on drinks, appetizers, entrees, and dessert," advises Michelle May, MD, author of Am I Hungry? What to Do When Diets Don't Work. She suggests giving yourself permission to enjoy your favorite foods -- in sensible portions.

To help you survive the seasonal parties without packing on the pounds, WebMD consulted diet gurus across the country for their best holiday diet tips. Here are their top 10 recommendations:

1. **Trim back the trimmings.** Go all out and deck the halls with boughs of holly, glitter, and lights, but when it comes to holiday food, accessorize with care. To shave calories, go easy when adding nuts, cheese, cream sauces, gravy, butter, and whipped cream -- additions that don't add much to the meal, but can add plenty to your waistline. Trim calories wherever you can so you leave the party feeling satisfied, but not stuffed, recommends Carolyn O'Neil, MS, RD, author of The Dish on Eating Healthy and Being Fabulous.

2. **Wear snug clothes and keep one hand busy.** When you wear snug-fitting attire, chances are you'll be too busy holding in your stomach to overeat. While you stand around looking posh in your holiday finery, hold a drink in your dominant hand so it won't be so easy to grab food, recommends obesity expert Cathy Nonas, MS, RD.

3. **Chew gum.** When you don't want to eat, pop a piece of sugarless gum into your mouth. This works well when you're cooking or when you're trying not to dive into the buffet, says Nonas.

4. **Be a food snob.** If you don't love it, don't eat it, says American Dietetic Association spokeswoman Melinda Johnson, MS, RD. Scan the buffet for foods you truly treasure and skip the everyday dishes that are available all year long. And don't think it's your responsibility to sample everything on the buffet. Go ahead and indulge in your personal holiday favorites, then find a seat and, slowly and mindfully, savor every mouthful.

5. **No skipping meals.** Always eat normally on the day of a party. "People who skip meals to save up calories tend to overeat everything in sight once they get there," says Katherine Tallmadge, MA, RD, author of Diet Simple. "Eating sensibly throughout the day will take the edge off the appetite and empower a bit of restraint." Start with a nourishing breakfast, have a light lunch, then a small snack or salad shortly before the event.

6. **Check it out.** First things first. When you arrive at the party, grab a sparkling water with a twist, and wait at least 30 minutes before eating. This will give you time to relax, get comfortable in your surroundings, and survey your food choices on the buffet before diving in, says Tallmadge. A buffet is an invitation to eat all you can, and unless you carefully scrutinize it and make wise choices, you're likely to overeat.

7. **Add fun and games.** Cynthia Sass, MPH, MA, RD, co-author of Your Diet Is Driving Me Crazy, proposes taking the focus off food and getting family and friends more active during holiday parties. Think horseshoes, badminton, sledging, ice skating, or building snowmen. Indoors, try a spirited game of charades, or rent an instructional dance video followed by a dance-off. "The best parties include dancing, so why not make dancing after eating a new holiday tradition for a great form of fun and recreation?" asks David Katz, MD, MPH, author of The Flavor Point Diet.
Top 10 Holiday Diet Tips of All Time cont’d

8. **Alternate alcohol with nonalcoholic beverages.** Alcoholic drinks are loaded with calories -- especially holiday favorites like eggnog. "Cut your alcohol calories in half by alternating water or seltzer between alcoholic beverages," Katz advises.

9. **Skip the appetizers.** "Eschew the appetizers rather than chewing on them," says Katz. If you need a little nibble before the meal, go for the veggies, fruit, salsa, or a small handful of nuts.

10. **Limit the variety.** Brian Wansink, PhD, author of *Mindless Eating*, suggests putting only two items on your plate when you go to the food table. Return as many times as you like, but only take two items each time. "Variety stimulates appetite, and if you limit your choices to just a few items and stick with these, it will be easier to control than eating a little bit of 20 different dishes," agrees Katz.

    Holiday parties are much more than food and drinks. They are a time to delight in the traditions of the season, and enjoy the company of family and friends. If you keep the focus on the spirit of the season -- and heed the advice of our diet experts -- you'll most likely get through the holidays without gaining a pound.

    And if you do splurge, don't beat yourself up, the experts say. Just get right back to normal eating and exercising, and try to do a better job at the next party.
Smoked Pork and Black-Eyed Peas with Collard Greens

- 10 large collard green leaves, washed and cut into 1/2-inch-wide strips
- 2 tablespoons peanut or olive oil
- 2/3 pound boneless, cooked and smoked pork chops, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1-1/2 cups cooked black-eyed peas or 1 (15-ounce) can cooked black-eyed peas, drained
- 1/4 cup sweet hot mustard
- 1/4 cup prepared hot sauce
- 3 tablespoons molasses
- 1 scant teaspoon ground caraway seeds
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces, optional
- 1/3 cup water
- Salt, pepper
- 6 prebaked buttermilk biscuits, each biscuit cut in half (top and bottom)

Using large
1. Pan, cook collard greens in oil over moderately high heat 5 to 7 minutes, stirring frequently.
2. Add pork, black-eyed peas, mustard, hot sauce, molasses, caraway seeds, butter and water.
3. Mix well.
4. Cook 7 to 8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until greens are nearly tender and mixture is thickened slightly.
5. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
6. Remove from heat.
7. Cool slightly.
8. Cover bottom of lightly greased 2-quart round baking dish with biscuit bottoms.
10. Cover with biscuit tops.
11. Bake at 400 degrees on center rack 30 to 35 minutes or until filling is hot.
12. Remove from oven and spoon onto plates, allowing 1 biscuit per person.
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