

Holiday health and safety tips

The holidays offer a perfect opportunity for enjoying loved ones, celebrating life, being grateful, and reflecting on what's important. They are also a time to appreciate the gift of health. Support health and safety for yourself and others by following these timeless holiday tips.

Wash your hands often

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water, rubbing them for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.

Stay warm

Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing.

Manage stress

The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health and pocketbook. Keep your commitments and spending in check. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Make sure to get proper sleep.

Travel safely

Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for his/her height, weight, and age.

Be smoke-free

Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, quit today! Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or talk to your health care provider for help.

Get check-ups and vaccinations

Exams and screenings can help find potential problems early, when the chances for treatment and cure are often better. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for a yearly exam. Ask what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history, and family health history.



Prevent injuries

Injuries can happen anywhere, and some often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of climbing on furniture when hanging decorations. Leave the fireworks to the professionals. Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or skateboarding to help prevent head injuries. Keep vaccinations up to date.

Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees, and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves, or candles unattended. Don't use generators, grills, or other gasoline- or charcoal-burning devices inside your home or garage. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test them once a month, and replace batteries twice a year.

Handle and prepare food safely

As you prepare holiday meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

Eat healthy, and be active

With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy. Limit fats, salt, and sugary foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to your favorite holiday music. Be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.

Pulling in the reins on holiday stress

We know you have so much to do during the holidays. Below are some examples of things that may be stressful, with suggestions of changes you could make to defuse stress:

Giving the perfect gifts

- Ask people what they want instead of scouring the earth to find the perfect gifts.
- Shop early, when there is more of a selection and stick to your gift budget.

Scheduling time with family and friends

- Simplify holiday commitments and traditions. Discuss with your family which traditions are most important to you and to them. It's okay to re-evaluate past traditions.
- Allow time for yourself. Remember to do things that *you* enjoy.
- Avoid time crunches by making plans to visit some friends and family soon after the holidays.
- Don't over-schedule yourself. Allow enough time to relax and recover after visiting with others.
- Tell family members about your commitments so you are not struggling against their expectations.

Coping with the holiday blues

- Try something new. Take a vacation.
- Spend time with people who care about you.
- Volunteer your time to help others. Spending time with those in need can help you feel less isolated.
- Try to appreciate the good things you have now instead of focusing on the past.
- Stay active. Get out. Go for a walk. Window shop.
- Accept feelings of sadness or loneliness. These feelings might not go away just because it's the holidays.
- Get help if you need it. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help any time of the year.

Source: Cleveland Clinic
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http://my.clevelandclinic.org/healthy_living/stress_management/hic_managing_holiday_stress.aspx



Holiday tip

Be realistic. Don't try to lose pounds during the holidays — instead try to maintain your current weight.

Source: Sutter Health Network
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<http://www.cpmc.org/about/e-health/11-05%20healthy-holidays.html>

Broiled sirloin with spicy mustard and apple chutney

Ingredients

For chutney:

- 1 Granny Smith apple, rinsed, peeled, cored, and diced (about 1 c)
- 2 Tbsp shallots, minced
- 1 Tbsp garlic, minced (about 2–3 cloves)
- ½ c canned no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 2 oz golden seedless raisins (about ½ c)
- ¼ c apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tbsp maple syrup

For steak:

- 4 beef top sirloin steaks, lean (3 oz each)
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp olive oil

For mustard dressing:

- 2 c low-sodium beef broth
- 2 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch

Directions

1. For the chutney, combine all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, and simmer for 20 minutes or until apples are cooked and soft. Remove from the heat and hold warm, or cool and store.
2. For the steaks, preheat grill pan or oven broiler (with the rack 3 inches from heat source) on high temperature.
3. Season the steaks with salt and pepper, and lightly coat with oil.
4. Grill or broil 3–4 minutes on each side, or to your desired doneness (to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F). Remove from the heat and set aside for 5 minutes.
5. For the mustard dressing, mix together beef broth, Dijon mustard, and cornstarch in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil on medium-high heat while stirring constantly. Lower the heat, and simmer for 2–3 minutes.
6. Serve each steak with ¼ cup of chutney and ½ cup of mustard dressing.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
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<https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov/recipe/detail.aspx?cId=0&rId=5&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>