



# The Parent's Guide to a Happy & Healthy Holiday Season

Communication, Nutrition & Stress Management  
Tips From the Nation's Premier Provider of  
Behavioral Healthcare Services



Now featuring healthy holiday recipes by Structure House nutritionists!

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# Introduction

The holidays should be a time of relaxation and reflection – a season in which we focus on friends, family and the simple joys that too often go unnoticed or unappreciated during the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Unfortunately, for many families the stresses and pressures of the holiday season threaten to overwhelm what we wish would be a time of simple celebration. And when we begin to feel unduly burdened by seasonal stresses, our health (specifically, our dedication to healthy eating) is often an early casualty.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way.

Included in this guide are tips for managing holiday stress and family pressure, as well as advice from nutrition experts on how to eat healthy when others around you are falling prey to the urge to overindulge.

From CRC Health Group to your home, we hope that the information in this guide helps make your holidays not only more manageable, but more enjoyable.

And when the festivities have ended and the decorations have been safely stored away, we are confident that the principles enumerated in these pages will be of great value to you in your pursuit of a healthy and happy New Year.

# Seven Simple Steps for Managing Holiday Stress

The holidays are supposed to be a time of family, togetherness and joy. Instead, many of us end up feeling overwhelmed, stressed and fatigued. To make matters worse, we often respond to that stress by overeating or otherwise abandoning our healthy diet.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way. The following are a few simple tips for managing your stress over the holidays (and the rest of the year, too, for that matter):

**#1: Stay Organized.** A lot of stress during the holidays comes from feeling overwhelmed, and feeling as though you are running out of time to get things accomplished. But you know your deadlines - the holidays happen at the same time every year. So start planning, buying and baking early enough that everything doesn't pile up on you at once.

**#2: Learn to Say No.** Take on only as much as you feel you can handle, and that you have the time for. Giving yourself room to relax and decompress during the holidays is more important than yet another holiday party.

**#3: Ask For Help.** You can't do it all over the holidays. The best way to get relief is to ask for help. The benefit? Not only will life be more manageable, but you'll be sharing your time with folks you care about (and who care about you).

**#4: Lower Your Expectations.** If you aren't able to hire an interior decorator, the chances of you making your house look like the North Pole in time for your holiday gathering are slim. Realize that not every present is going to look like it was gift-wrapped at a department store and not every meal is going to be gourmet.

**#5: Stick to a Budget.** By creating (and sticking to) a budget, you will know how much you are comfortably able to spend, and for what. Remember that the purpose of the holidays is not to spend a lot of money - it's a time to gather with loved ones.

**#6: Think Positively.** If you're a worst-case scenario kind of person, try to put a positive spin on things instead. Being stressed about things that may not happen isn't productive, and can take energy away from accomplishing things that will happen. Learn to expect the unexpected, but also realize that the unexpected can often be good.

**#7: Let It Go.** Holidays often drum up a lot of family baggage and unnecessary drama. Accepting your family for who they are and how they act, and learning to let things go, will do a lot as far as reducing stress. Some things just don't change, and the best way to deal with these challenges is to accept them and move on, as difficult as that may be.

# School's Out! (Uh, Oh)

## Tips for Avoiding Family Conflict During the Holidays

The holiday season can be a wonderful opportunity for families to reconnect, and for both parents and children to spend a bit of leisurely time together away from the stresses and pressures of work and school.

But as every parent of a teenager knows, an excess of free time isn't necessarily such a good thing – especially when it comes to keeping your child out of trouble and your family out of conflict.

The following are a few tips for increasing the odds that your holiday season will be free of raised voices, slammed doors and other symptoms of family conflict.

### **Establish Rules & Consequences**

Regardless of whether your children are adolescents, teens or even young adults, it's important that you let them know exactly what expect of them (for example, curfews, chores, and general behavior), and what consequences will result from their failure to comply. Then be sure that you stand behind what you've said.

### **Be Reasonable & Realistic**

In your ideal world, your children get up at dawn, cook you a hot nutritious breakfast, do the laundry, and then begin knocking on your neighbor's doors to see if anyone needs any help with anything else. Back here in reality, though setting acceptable standards begins with managing your own expectations.

- With these thoughts in mind, craft a list of behavioral expectations that are both realistic and reasonable. Make rules that your children are capable of following
- Establish penalties that offer an opportunity for rehabilitation instead of existing merely for retribution.
- When talking to your children about family rules, make sure that the communication takes the form of a discussion, not a lecture.
- Of course, if your child has proven himself unworthy of your trust, then this factor needs to be addressed when talking about rules.
- Discussions about rules and expectations are excellent opportunities to talk about the power of trust – including how it is gained and lost.

It's also not a bad idea to remember that age-old military maxim: Never give a command

that you're not ready and willing to enforce.

### **Keep 'em Busy**

When it comes to your kids and good behavior, boredom is *not* your friend.

Whether you're enlisting their help in decorating the house, sending them to the neighbor's house to shovel the driveway, or taking everyone to the mall for some last-minute shopping, the more activities you engage them in, the less opportunity they'll have to sneak away and engage in off-limits behaviors.

Develop a list of age-appropriate assignments and activities for your children – and be sure to balance “family time” with opportunities for your kids to enjoy moments of independence.

### **Share the Burden**

In your effort to keep your kids on the proverbial straight and narrow, don't think you have to “go it alone.”

If you anticipate having problems with your teen's behavior, contact the school guidance counselor or ask your family doctor for a referral to a mental health professional. Also, the Internet features a variety of resources (from professionals to parents who are experiencing the same challenges you are) to help you learn more about helping teens behave appropriately.

If your teen is exhibiting particularly troubling attitudes or behavior patterns, know that there is help for these situations as well.

### **Enjoy the Opportunity**

Yes, having a teen or two underfoot for a few weeks can be a stressful experience – but it's also the stuff that memories are made of.

- Take advantage of every opportunity you have to let your children know that you love them and are proud of them.
- Kind words may not be a cure-all for every problem your family is experiencing – but their absence can make bad situations a whole lot worse.
- Have high expectations for your children, and don't be shy about letting them know when they've been “caught” doing something great.

# Five Ways to Keep Your Teen Busy During Winter Break

Teenagers everywhere anxiously await the annual winter break from the daily grind of school, homework and tests. But for parents, going into an extended break without a plan vastly increases the chances that your teens will use their free time to get into trouble.

Here are a few ways your teens can make productive use of their winter vacation:

## **1. Earn Some Spending Money**

Although winter break isn't long enough to get a "real" job, many teens make a little extra spending money by babysitting, shoveling snow off driveways or helping others clean house after the holidays.

These odd jobs will keep your teens occupied and make them less dependent on you for all of their expenses without making winter break one big chore.

## **2. Serve Others**

There's no time like the holidays to give back to those in need. Local soup kitchens, churches, food banks and hospitals are always in need of a helping hand. Your teens can also get involved with a toy drive or adopt-a-family-in-need program, or raise money for a cause close to their heart.

## **3. Get Organized**

In the past few months, hectic schedules and school stress have probably contributed to your teens' room looking more like a jungle than a study area.

As new gifts come in with the holidays, encourage your teens to donate the clothes, books and other belongings they no longer use. A thorough reorganization and cleaning will help ensure the next semester gets off to a good start.

## **4. Spend Time as a Family**

The holidays are a busy time for everyone, but they're also an ideal time for family bonding. Schedule family game night, movie night or an evening of games in the park, and make sure everyone makes it a priority to be there.

If your extended family lives nearby, winter break provides a rare opportunity for your teens to get to know their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins a little better.

## 5. Go to Camp

Not all families look forward to winter break. For some teens, the added stress of the holiday season and the lack of daily structure, combined with the extra time spent at home with their family, make it prime time for acting out.

- During school vacations, many teens experiment with drugs or alcohol, go to unsupervised parties and get into heated arguments with their parents and other relatives.
- Instead of worrying for your teen's safety or simply hoping this year will be different from the last, consider the benefits of enrolling your teens in a wilderness therapy program:
- Your teen will be in a safe, structured, highly supervised environment where he or she will stay out of trouble and receive intensive therapy to address their emotional or behavioral issues.
- Wilderness therapy programs help teens focus on what is truly important in their lives, and instill a sense of gratitude while teaching new coping skills and communication strategies.
- Because school is out of session, your teens can get the help they need without missing many classes or falling behind.
- Being away from home during the holidays may be just the wake-up call your teen needs in order to realize that their behaviors are destructive and that they want something else for their future.
- With an out-of-control teen in the home, there's a good chance that the rest of your family needs to do some healing of their own. Sometimes the only way parents and siblings can regroup is to have some time apart.
- By enrolling your teen in a wilderness program during winter break, you send the message that their negative behaviors won't be tolerated anymore and that you care enough to invest the time, money and energy into a program that can help.
- Sacrificing tumultuous family time this year by sending your teen to wilderness camp will ensure that there are many more healthy opportunities to celebrate together in the future.
- Sometimes distance brings families closer, as teens are able to communicate their feelings and resolve issues through letter-writing and phone calls without withdrawing or resorting to explosive in-person confrontations.

There are dozens of ways to make winter break both productive and enjoyable, but one thing is for sure: A busy teen is a happy teen, so start making plans today!

# Healthy Holiday Nutrition Tips



Here are tips to help you pass on high-calorie temptations and stay healthy through the holidays. Remember, maintaining your weight during the holidays is success!

**Enjoy healthy seasonal foods.** Many traditional holiday foods are naturally low fat and healthy. Take advantage of fresh, seasonal produce like winter squash, sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts, rutabaga, parsnips, apples, tangerines, tangelos, and pumpkin.

**Pre-plan meals.** You are more likely to choose foods on the basis of nourishment when you have a plan. It's easier to forgo the fruitcake when you have already decided on the fruit cup.

**Focus on the social aspect of the holidays.** You don't need to partake in high-calorie fare to enjoy yourself. Focus on the conversation rather than the food at get-togethers.

**Maintain a food diary.** Make sure to write it all down – the good and the bad! It's easier to control your weight over the holidays if you consistently record all food choices.

**Eat simply.** The more complicated the dish, the more likely it is to have hidden high-calorie ingredients.

**Control your portions.** Remember that a half-cup serving of pasta or rice is the size of a computer mouse. A three-ounce portion of meat, poultry or fish is the size of a cassette tape or a deck of cards.

**Make time for exercise.** If you can't commit to a long walk, take several short ones. Mix it up with yoga or Pilates, or go dancing for a fun alternative.

**Forgo alcohol.** It's not just eggnog that helps put on the pounds. Alcohol in general is a major source of hidden calories. In addition, it stimulates the appetite and decreases inhibitions making it more difficult to control eating. Sparkling water with a twist can make for a festive alternative.

**Be reasonable.** Attempting to lose weight over the holidays can be frustrating and unrealistic. Focus on maintaining your weight. Making it through the holidays without gaining weight is a major accomplishment.

**Start new traditions.** Challenge old thoughts and beliefs. Everything does not have to be the way it has always been. For example, you don't have to entertain with great quantities of fattening food. Try hosting a potluck where everyone brings at least one healthy holiday option.

## Healthy Holiday Menu Ideas

### General Calorie Information

4 ounces Sliced Turkey (white meat only)	140 calories
¼ cup Gravy	30 calories
⅓ cup Pumpkin Pecan Stuffing	100 calories
½ cup Garlic Mashed Potatoes	125 calories
½ cup Green Beans with Pine Nuts and Raisins	60 calories
2 Tbsp Cranberry Apple Relish	40 calories

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### Roasted Turkey Breast

Debone turkey breast but leave skin intact. Place the turkey breast in a roasting pan with 4 cups of water and bake at 350°F for 1-1 ½ hours or until it reaches an internal temperature of 165°. Remove skin and cut against the grain into thin slices.

**Serves:** Varies based on size of turkey breast

**Serving size:** 4 oz cooked weight

**Nutrition Information:** 140 calories, 3 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 28 g protein, 0 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber, 69 mg cholesterol, 64 mg sodium

### Gravy

#### Ingredients

- 3 cups low sodium chicken stock
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp white pepper
- 3 Tbsp corn starch

In a small sauce pan combine chicken stock, salt, pepper and cornstarch. Mix until cornstarch dissolves. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until thickened. Serve immediately.

**Serves:** 12

**Serving size:** ¼ cup

**Nutrition Information:** 30 calories, 0.5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 4 g protein, 2 g carbohydrates, 0 g fiber, 12 mg cholesterol, 140 mg sodium

# Healthy Holiday Menu Ideas

## Pumpkin Pecan Stuffing

### Ingredients

- 3 slices whole wheat bread, cubed
- 1 tsp margarine
- ¾ cup white onion
- ¾ cup mushrooms
- ⅓ cup celery
- ½ cup diced apple with peel
- ⅓ cup pecans
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tsp dried sage
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ cup canned pumpkin, plain
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 whole egg
- 1 cup low sodium vegetable or chicken broth

Preheat oven to 250°F. Place bread cubes on a baking sheet. Bake at 250°F for 1 hour or until dry, tossing occasionally. Remove from oven. Increase oven temperature to 350° F.

Melt margarine in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions, mushrooms and celery to the pan. Sauté 5 minutes. Add apple and sauté 5 more minutes. Add pecans and sauté 1 minute. Remove from heat and add parsley, sage and thyme.

Combine the pumpkin, salt, pepper, egg and broth in a large bowl. Add to bread and mushroom mixture. Stir gently to combine. Spoon mixture into a 13 x 9 inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Cover with foil and bake at 350°F for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 15 minutes or until the top is crisp.

**Serves:** 8

**Serving size:** ⅓ cup

**Nutrition Information:** 100 Calories, 5.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 3 g protein, 11 g carbohydrates, 2.5 g fiber, 20 mg cholesterol, 220 mg sodium

# Healthy Holiday Menu Ideas

## Garlic Mashed Potatoes

### Ingredients

- 2 ½ lbs potatoes
- ½ cup low fat buttermilk
- ½ tsp salt
- 3 garlic cloves

Preheat oven to 450°F. Wrap garlic cloves in foil and roast in the oven for 45 minutes. Peel and dice potatoes. Place potatoes in a pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and cook until soft. Drain potatoes, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Add buttermilk, salt, roasted garlic and a small amount of the cooking liquid to the potatoes and mash. Add more cooking liquid as needed to reach the desired consistency.

**Serves:** 8

**Serving size:** ½ cup

**Nutrition Information:** 125 calories, 2.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 3.5 g protein, 25 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 1 mg cholesterol, 125 mg sodium

## Green Beans with Pine Nuts & Raisins

### Ingredients

- 4 cups frozen green beans
- 2½ tbsp olive oil
- 4 tsp raisins
- 4 tsp pine nuts

Add pine nuts to a pan and toast until golden brown on medium heat. Watch pine nuts carefully to avoid burning them. Set aside. Sauté green beans in olive oil for 2 minutes, tossing or stirring constantly. Add the raisins and sauté for another 3 minutes, or until done. Transfer green beans to a serving dish and sprinkle with pine nuts.

**Serves:** 8

**Serving size:** ½ cup

**Nutrition Information:** 60 calories, 4 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 1 g protein, 6 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 0 g cholesterol, 2 mg sodium

# Healthy Holiday Menu Ideas

## Cranberry Apple Relish

### Ingredients

- 1 cup diced apple, with peel
- 2 Tbsp packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup apple juice
- 1/2 tsp ginger
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 cups raw cranberries

Dice apples. Combine apples and remaining ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer until thick (about 15 minutes), stirring occasionally. Cool completely and serve.

**Serves:** 8

**Serving size:** 1/4 cup

**Nutrition Information:** 40 calories, 0 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g protein, 11 g carbohydrates, 1.5 g fiber, 0 mg cholesterol, 2 mg sodium

## Nutritional Note

All Nutrition Tips & Menu Ideas on pages 6-10 were provided by nutrition experts at Structure House, one of the nation's most widely respected residential weight loss programs for adult men and women.

To learn more about Structure House, visit [www.structurehouse.com](http://www.structurehouse.com).

# About Us

CRC Health Group is the nation's premier provider of behavioral healthcare services.

With a network of more than 140 programs and facilities, CRC is uniquely prepared to provide life-changing residential and outpatient treatment for adolescents, teenagers, and adults who are struggling with a wide range of issues and challenges.

- ADD/ADHD
- Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism
- Anxiety/Panic Disorder
- Compulsive Gambling
- Depression
- Drug Abuse & Drug Addiction
- Dual Diagnosis
- Eating Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder)
- Overweight/Obesity
- Self-Harm
- Sex/Love Addiction
- Substance Abuse
- Trauma/PTSD
- Weight Management

With a wide array personalized treatment options, CRC provides individuals, families, and professionals with the opportunity to choose the most appropriate setting for their behavioral, addiction, weight management, and therapeutic education needs.

CRC Health Group is deeply committed to making its services widely and easily available to those in need, while maintaining a passion for delivering the most advanced treatment available.

For more about CRC Health Group visit [www.crchealth.com](http://www.crchealth.com) or call (877) 637-6237.

