

CARING

FOR YOUR

Spirit

We all love the Holiday season - right?

The whirlwind, the food, the parties, the gifts, the decorations – or (can it be) maybe we don't always love the Holidays?

Sometimes it's all just too much. Too much money, too little sleep, too many expectations, and too many calories!

According to the National Mental Health Association, reasons for feeling blue around the holidays are numerous. They range from fatigue, a result of all of the increased holiday activity, to financial limitations and family tensions.

Experts say one of the fastest routes to holiday depression is unrealistic expectations.

Spirit of Women and your local Spirit Hospital want you to Care for Your Spirit this holiday season and we are providing some ideas, advice, and tips to help you do just that. The key to enjoying the season is to be selective, choose those things you really must do or really want to do and let the other things go. Remember "No" is not a four-letter-word. The following ideas will help you make sure you get the most out of the season:

DELEGATE.

Don't try to do it all by yourself. People often want to help and to be involved. By breaking down tasks and doling them out to friends and family, everything becomes more manageable.





VOLUNTEER.

One of the best antidotes for the holiday blues is doing something for someone else. Volunteer your time this holiday season to help others who have less than you do. Taking the focus off of yourself and putting it on others can really make you feel much better. Not only can you help other people, but doing so will add a lot more meaning to your holiday season.

SPEND SOME TIME ALONE.

Some people love the energy and exuberance of big holiday parties and activities. For others, all of it is very taxing. If you find yourself getting a little anxious, take a breather. Find a quiet spot to relax and recharge your batteries. Other people will be so caught up in what is going on that they probably won't even miss you.

LET GO OF THE PAST.

Don't be disappointed if your holidays aren't like they used to be. Life brings changes. Embrace the future, and don't dwell on the fact that the "good old days" are gone.

DON'T DRINK TOO MUCH.

It is easy to overindulge around the holidays, but excessive drinking will only make you feel more depressed.

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK.

Don't think in absolute terms. You aren't the best cook in the world, or the worst. You aren't super mom, or the most horrible mother in the world.

Source: University of Maryland Medical Center

Some of us are willing to suspend normal "rules" for the holidays and believe that almost anything can happen. Some of these holiday myths are listed below – along with the truth.

Suicide rates are higher during the holidays.

One pervasive myth is that more people try to commit suicide over the holidays, but numerous studies have failed to find that suicides peak during the holidays.

Poinsettias are toxic if eaten.

Poinsettias, even in large doses, appear to be safe, though eating them is not recommended.

Hangovers are curable.

Another common holiday myth surrounds hangover cures. Although most everyone has a favorite that they swear works for them, the only real cure for a hangover is not to drink excessively in the first place.

Sugar makes children hyperactive.

At least 12 double-blind, randomized, controlled trials have looked at the effect of sugar on children, and none found evidence for the sugar-equals-hyperactivity myth. In one study, children weren't even given sugar, but their parents were told they had been – and parents who thought their children had eaten sugar rated their behavior as more hyperactive.

You lose most of your body heat through your head.

Your head, like the rest of your body, releases heat, but it's no more important to shield your head than to protect other parts of your body against the cold.

Eating at night makes you fat.

Eating at night won't make you fat as long as what you're eating doesn't put you over your normal daily calorie total. Generally, people who eat at night tend to gain weight, because those calories consumed nocturnally are in addition to three regular meals and snacks.

These tips and ideas should help you this holiday season. However, if you find your spirits sagging don't struggle alone, talk to your doctor about treatment options and find the solution that helps you care for yourself and Care for Your Spirit.

Sources: Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health; Christmas issue of BMJ published online Dec.18

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