

Keep stress of holidays at bay

In the past couple of weeks, I've given you some things to reduce the stress of the holiday season. Today, I'll talk about things NOT to do to achieve the same end:

- 1. Avoid the media.** Stop watching television, ads, magazines, radio and billboards. They create an unrealistic vision of what holidays should be.
- 2. Don't miss meals.** Low blood sugar causes fatigue and disorientation, leading to stress and illness.
- 3. Don't drive distracted.** More injuries and accidents occur during holidays than any other time of year. Focus on the road and watch out for road rage.
- 4. Don't put yourself in debt.** Buy within your budget. It isn't the size of the gift, it's the heartfelt thought that goes into it.
- 5. Don't buy useless gifts.** It is now the trend to purchase investments as gifts, especially for children and teens, bonds, college savings, education, and personal growth gifts.
- 6. Don't exhaust yourself.** Exhaustion makes our bodies run down and susceptible to colds and flu. Take increased amounts of Vitamin C, echinacea and drink lots of water. Most importantly, see your chiropractor and stay in adjustment.
- 7. Don't invite guests you don't like.** Don't make your home a bed and breakfast for people you don't want there, even if they are former friends or family. It's your family's holiday.

8. **Don't let guilt spoil your holiday.** Jealousy or pressure from family or environment can create feelings of guilt. Don't buy into it. Those feeling belong to the outside party, Enjoy yourself.
9. **Don't' compete with other families.** Holidays aren't about who spent more or how many or whose is larger. It's about the love and spirit of sharing and caring.
10. **Don't give goods – give services.** Gift certificates for movies, dinner, massages, chiropractic exams, etc. are non-returnable and give people and experience rather than an object.
11. **Boycott Christmas mall shopping.** Don't get caught with the throngs of other stressful holiday shoppers. Shop out of a few favorite catalogues or by mail or phone.
12. **Don't get caught in the kitchen.** Prepare foods ahead of time and enjoy your guests.
13. **Don't watch television when guests visit.** Don't be distracted by sports or Nutcracker shows. This may be the only quality time you get to spend with friends and family all year.
14. **Don't drink alcohol.** Alcohol consumption is a proven depressant. With emotions already high, alcohol can increase anxiety and depression as well as lead you to act like a fool or say something you regret.
15. **Minimize sugar intake.** Sugar for kids is equivalent to adding fire to gasoline. Kids are hyper as usual. Add sugar and they bounce off the walls. Wait one hour after meals to reduce sugar reactions if you must include it.