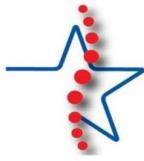


THE STAR



ALL STAR HEALTH CARE

PHYSICAL MEDICINE

210-521-6886

Holiday Wellness



Tips for a Healthy Holiday Season

We'd like to share some tips for having a happy and healthy holiday season.

As exciting as the holidays are, added stress can really affect how your body functions. Whether you'll be shopping, baking or attending holiday parties, chances are you'll be putting your body through a lot more than it's normally accustomed to and all of this can trigger back, neck and knee pain. Here are some tips to help you prepare for a happy and healthy holiday season.

When shopping, dress appropriately Wear comfortable low-heeled shoes with arch supports and leave your heavy purse at home. Opt for a light backpack or a smaller bag to carry your personal belongings.

Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. A long day of shopping, should be treated like an athletic event. Make sure you stretch before and after. Consider making extra trips to the car to drop off your goods so you don't have to carry those heavy bags around all day. Take advantage of online shopping. Skip the long lines and crowded malls completely and shop from the comfort of your own home. Simplify your to-do list by picking up gift cards at the grocery store. You'll get two errands done in one stop.

Don't neglect your fitness routine. Although you'll be busier than normal, it's important to keep those workouts on your daily to-do list. As they help to manage your stress. Get enough sleep. The holidays won't be as enjoyable if you aren't rested. Also, try to stay on track with your healthy eating. Gaining extra weight will only contribute to back pain and health problems. Before attending a party, make sure you eat something healthy and drink plenty of water to avoid overeating while you're there. It's ok to indulge a little with holiday treats, just be sure to be sensible about it.

Simple preparation can help you manage holiday stressors. If you do experience pain this season, please give our office a call at (210)521-6886. We'll help get you back on track again in no time at all!

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December 2017

8 Ways to Fight Colds and Flu

Cough, sniffle, achoo! Cold and flu germs have some crafty ways of getting around.

Often these viral villains take to the air. They spread by airborne droplets when someone coughs, sneezes or even talks. They can also land on surfaces — and hitch a ride when you touch them with your hands.

Germ fighting 101

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older is the single best way to avoid getting influenza. But there's more you can do. These stay-well strategies can help keep you and your family from getting — or passing along — a cold or flu bug:

- 1. Hit the sink.** Be sure to wash your hands regularly to remove any germs. A good, thorough scrubbing is key. That means for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water.
- 2. Have sanitizer at the ready.** Soap and water aren't always available. So keep hand sanitizer in your car, your bag or tote, and your workspace too. Look for products that contain at least 60 percent alcohol.
- 3. Be hands-off!** Try to limit how much you touch your face. Germs can enter your body through your eyes, nose or mouth.
- 4. Cover that cough.** Make it a habit to cough or sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your elbow. Teach kids this trick too.
- 5. Keep your distance.** As much as possible, try to avoid close contact with anyone who's ill. If you do get sick, stay home until you're better.
- 6. Wipe 'em out.** Regularly clean surfaces you touch often — such as keyboards, phones, remote controls, door handles and countertops. Use soapy water and a household disinfectant.
- 7. Share not.** Remind your family not to share items such as cups, silverware or toothbrushes.
- 8. Build a strong defense.** When you take care of yourself, you help your body fight off illness. So be sure to get plenty of sleep. Choose healthy foods — and get regular exercise.*



What to do next

Get the latest information on flu season at flu.gov. You'll find timely updates — plus prevention pointers, flu-care tips and more. *Talk with your doctor before significantly increasing your activity level. The information provided here is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be nor should be construed as medical or other advice. Talk to an appropriate health care professional to determine what may be right for you.

United HealthCare Services, Inc.

11 Ways to Avoid Back Pain

Don't let back pain steal your holiday joy. This article will give you tips on how to avoid having back pain ruin your holidays.

1. Get more exercise. If your back is hurting, you may think the best way to get relief is to limit exercise and to rest. A day or two of rest may help, but more than that may not help the pain. Experts now know that regular physical activity can help ease inflammation and muscle tension.
2. Watch your weight. Extra pounds, especially in your midsection, can make back pain worse by shifting your center of gravity and putting strain on your lower back. Staying within 10 pounds of your ideal weight may help control back pain.
3. If you smoke, stop. Smoking restricts the flow of nutrient-containing blood to spinal discs, so smokers are especially vulnerable to back pain.
4. Sleeping position. If you're prone to back pain, talk with your doctor about the best sleeping position. Sleeping on your side with your knees pulled up slightly toward your chest is sometimes suggested. Prefer to sleep on your back? Put one pillow under your knees and another under your lower back. Sleeping on your stomach can be especially hard on your back. If you can't sleep any other way, place a pillow under your hips.
5. Pay attention to your posture. The best chair for preventing back pain is one with a straight back or low-back support. Keep your knees a bit higher than your hips while seated. Prop your feet on a stool if you need to. If you must stand for a prolonged period, keep your head up and your stomach pulled in. If possible, rest one foot on a stool -- and switch feet every five to 15 minutes.
6. Be careful how you lift. Don't bend over from the waist to lift heavy objects. Bend your knees and squat, pulling in your stomach muscles and holding the object close to your body as you stand up. Don't twist your body while lifting. If you can, push rather than pull heavy objects. Pushing is easier on the back.
7. Avoid high heels. They can shift your center of gravity and strain your lower back. Stick to a one-inch heel. If you have to go higher, bring along a pair of low-heeled shoes and slip into them if you become uncomfortable.
8. Stash the skinny jeans. Clothing so tight that it interferes with bending, sitting, or walking can aggravate back pain.
9. Lighten your wallet. Sitting on an overstuffed wallet may cause discomfort and back pain. If you're going to be sitting for a prolonged period -- while driving, for example, take your wallet out of your back pocket.
10. Pick the right handbag or briefcase. Buy a bag or briefcase with a wide, adjustable strap that's long enough to reach over your head. A messenger bag (like the ones bike messengers wear) is made to wear this way. Having the strap on the opposite shoulder of the bag distributes the weight more evenly and helps keep your shoulders even and your back pain-free. When carrying a heavy bag or case without straps, switch hands frequently to avoid putting all the stress on one side of the body. To lighten the load, periodically purge bags, cases, backpacks, and other carriers of things you don't need.
11. Forget about back braces. Various back supports are available, from elastic bands to special corsets. They can be helpful after certain kinds of surgery, but there is not much evidence that they help treat chronic back pain.

Neck Pain Prevention

Reduce your stress and tension: Tense muscles in the neck and shoulder can lead to neck pain. Find a few effective ways to reduce your stress (journaling, talking to a friend, going on a walk, etc.), and use those when you feel stress starting to build.

Sit and stand properly: Poor posture (think: hunched over) can very quickly lead to neck pain. Watch how you're standing and sitting every day. (Your mother really was right about the importance of good posture.)

Exercise both your neck and body regularly: Aerobic exercise is especially good, and you should aim for a 30-minute cardio workout 5 times a week.

Attain and maintain a healthy weight: This is a good "life health" tip, but since your spine is responsible for carrying the weight of your body, being at a healthy weight will help you take good care of your spine and not overstrain it.

Eat healthy food: Keeping a healthy meal plan will also help you maintain a healthy weight.

Taking care of your neck is a lifetime endeavor. Lifestyle changes are the best road to wellness, and of course, making these changes will benefit more than just your neck.

Written by Jason M. Highsmith, MD

Holiday Appetizers

Here are some healthier side dishes for your holiday parties



Holiday Cheese Ball

Ingredients

1 pound low fat cream cheese, at room temperature
2 cups shredded firm cheese, such as Cheddar, pepper Jack or Colby
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup pickled piquante peppers, such as Peppadews, finely chopped
1/2 cup fresh parsley leaves, finely chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh chives
Crackers, sliced bread or crudites, for serving

Directions

Special equipment: A small (6-cup) Bundt pan

Line the inside of a 6-cup Bundt pan with plastic wrap. Process the cream cheese, shredded cheese, Worcester-shire sauce, 1/2 teaspoon salt and few grinds of pepper in a food processor until smooth. Empty the mixture into a medium bowl, and fold in all but 2 tablespoons of the chopped peppers.

Spoon the cheese mixture into the prepared Bundt pan; pack it in, spread into an even layer and cover (or simply form the cheese mixture into a ball and wrap tightly with plastic wrap). Refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour up to 2 days.

Uncover and invert the cheese mold (or unwrap and transfer the ball) onto a serving platter. Sprinkle with the chives and parsley to completely coat the wreath, and garnish with the reserved 2 tablespoons peppers. Serve with crack-ers, sliced bread or crudites.



Almost-Famous Spinach-Artichoke Dip

Ingredients

Kosher salt
2 10-ounce bags spinach, stems removed
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
2 tablespoons minced onion
1 clove garlic, minced
2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
1 1/4 cups whole milk
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 1/4 cups grated parmesan cheese
1/4 cup sour cream, plus more for serving
1/2 cup shredded white sharp cheddar cheese
1/2 cup frozen artichoke hearts, thawed, squeezed dry and roughly chopped
Tortilla chips and salsa for serving

Directions

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Stir in the spinach and cook until bright green, about 30 seconds. Drain and rinse under cold water; squeeze out the excess moisture, then finely chop.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook until the onion is soft, about 2 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring, until lightly toasted, about 1 minute. Whisk in the milk and cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, parmesan and sour cream.

Return the pot to medium heat. Add the spinach, cheddar and artichokes and stir until the cheese melts and the dip is heated through. Serve warm with tortilla chips, salsa and sour cream.



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National Handwashing Week December 3-9

National Handwashing Week December 3-9 Holidays are a time for potlucks, friends, family and cheer. And cold and flu season! With that in mind, are you practicing good handwashing? Handwashing is one of the most important things we can do to avoid getting sick and spreading germs. Are you doing it right?



10 Ways to Avoid Winter Joint Pain

As mercury drops, joint aches rise. Winter can be the season of pain for people with arthritis. The exact science behind cold-related joint aches is uncertain, but there's no doubt symptoms can worsen, says Dr. Kelly Weselman, an Atlanta rheumatologist. It could be that muscles, ligaments and joints just get stiffer with lower temperatures. She says. What's clear is that patients do feel the difference between 90-degree summer days and frigid winter overnight temps. Here are 10 ways to protect vulnerable joints as the weather grows cold.

1. Realize discomfort is real - Don't delay treatment of your aching joints. Go in to see your physician and prevent further discomfort.
2. Feel the burn (exercise) - staying active is imperative for function and mobility. Cutting down on your activities will lead to a decreased range of motion and more joint pain.
3. Layer up - Dress warmly in layers. Keeping joints warm is essential along with surrounding muscles and ligaments.
4. Tweak your winter workout - Adapt to the colder months by doing aerobics indoors. Heated indoor pools are also good options for joint-friendly fitness.
5. As people get older, their joints tend to get stiffer. Stretching can help keep joint pain away when done on a regular basis.
6. Take OTC painkillers with care. While medicines like acetaminophen and ibuprofen can help people get through the colder winter months, be careful when taking them. These medications may have adverse effects if you have kidney or liver problems or stomach ulcers.
7. Apply heat in moderation - Warm packs for cold joints can help during cold winter months. Just make sure it is warm heat and not hot, as this may cause burns to the skin. Take care not to fall asleep with heating pads. Patients with neuropathy should use heat or ice packs for no more than 10 minutes at a time and check every three to five minutes for skin reactions.
8. Skin rubs and creams - OTC heat gels and other rub on remedies can help ease joint pain. One of the top recommended products is Biofreeze.
9. Be extra careful with certain conditions - People with vascular conditions and conditions such as lupus should be extra careful during these months as many of their symptoms come on suddenly and stay for longer periods of time.
10. Look to warmer days - There's a warmer light at the end of the tunnel. For people suffering from cold-weather joint pain. "It's important to keep moving and remember summer will come again."

By [Lisa Esposito](#), Staff Writer USA News and World Report Health



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@allstarhealthcaresa

Win a FREE bone pillow!

Follow us on Instagram to be entered into our weekly drawing to win a **FREE** bone pillow! Drawings held weekly.

HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT? LIKE AND SHARE US ON FACEBOOK



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WIN A FREE TURKEY!!!

Visit our office between Dec 1st and Dec. 20th to be entered into a drawing for a free turkey! Drawing to be held Dec. 21st.

Holiday Schedule

In Observance of the Christmas Holiday we will be closed Sat. Dec. 23rd thru Tues. Dec. 26th. We will Re-open on Wednesday December 27th. In observance of New Years, we will be closed Monday January 1st but will re-open Tuesday January 2nd.



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