

Preventing Burnout During the Holiday Season

Everyday life can be hectic enough without the added pressure of the holidays, which can also be a source of major stress and burnout for many people. Burnout isn't just about being tired; it's emotional, mental and physical depletion caused by prolonged stress. However, with some planning and self-care, you can protect your mental and physical well-being while still enjoying the festivities.

The American Psychological Association reports that the holiday season brings added stress for 2 out of every 5 people.

Consider these tips to help prevent burnout:

- **Set realistic expectations.** Social media and cultural norms often create pressure. Focus on meaningful experiences rather than flawless decorations, trendy outfits or extravagant gifts. Gratitude journaling can help shift your mindset toward what truly matters.
- **Start early.** No matter your holiday plans, spreading out your tasks and starting early will help with stress levels. This way, you won't be waiting until the last minute to complete tasks and rushing through responsibilities.

- **Take time to recharge.** Self-care during the holidays isn't indulgent; it's essential. Regular breaks from daily stressors can prevent burnout by helping your body and mind relax and recharge. Rest restores your energy, boosts your mood and increases productivity.
- **Maintain boundaries.** Boundaries protect your emotions and your physical space. They can be a healthy strategy as you navigate the holiday season and a full calendar. Only commit to the invitations or requests that truly matter to you and let go of the rest.
- **Make a list of all visible and invisible tasks.** Often, the mental load of holiday planning falls on one person and can go unnoticed. For example, "buying a gift" includes making a budget, understanding interests or sizes, deciding on a gift, purchasing it and wrapping it. When invisible labor becomes visible, it's easier to delegate tasks and ask for help.

While these practical strategies can help address some holiday stressors, you should also seek further support from a doctor or mental health professional.

Mindful Holiday Eating

The holiday season often means more parties and gatherings—and an abundance of festive food and drinks. However, practicing mindful holiday eating can help you savor the season without overdoing it. This healthy approach encourages focusing on preparing and consuming food in a distraction-free environment. Mindful eating offers physical and mental health advantages, such as better body cue recognition, overeating prevention, healthier food choices, stress reduction and weight loss.

Consider the following mindful eating tips:

- Honor your hunger and satiety cues.
- Start with small portions.

- Use all five senses when you eat.
- Take small bites and chew slowly.
- Limit distractions while eating.
- Don't skip meals.

Mindful eating doesn't mean avoiding your favorite holiday foods. It's simply about bringing more awareness and enjoyment to your food. You can also try to prioritize the social aspect of gatherings and engage in meaningful conversations to reduce your focus on food.

By practicing mindful holiday eating, you can enjoy the season and create lasting memories. Contact a dietitian if you need guidance on mindful eating.

Learning Your Family Health History

Most people have a family history of at least one chronic disease. Your family health history is one of the most powerful tools for understanding your risk for disease and conditions like heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. Knowing this information can help you and your health care provider make informed decisions about screenings, lifestyle changes and preventive care.

A 23andMe survey revealed that although 9 out of 10 Americans agree that knowing family health history is important for knowing their own health risks, fewer than half (38%) actually know it.

The holiday season is a great time to gather or update family health history information so you can take charge of your health in the new year. Consider asking your family members these questions:

- What is your family's ancestry or ethnic background?

- Do you have any chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes or obesity?
- Do you have any health conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol or asthma?
- Have you been diagnosed with any other serious health issues, such as cancer, stroke or Alzheimer's disease?
- How old were you when each of these diseases or health conditions was diagnosed?

Remember to ask about the cause and age of death for relatives who have died. It's important to record your family health history and continually share updates with family members. The U.S. surgeon general's web-based tool, [My Family Health Portrait](#), can help you keep track of information. If you have health concerns, talk with your doctor.

Recipe of the Month

Parmesan Chive Biscuits

Makes: 12 servings

Ingredients

- 2 cups biscuit mix
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup 2% reduced-fat milk
- 4 Tbsp. butter (melted)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Parmesan cheese (freshly grated)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. fresh chives (finely chopped)

Preparations

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Stir together to mix well. Do not overmix.
4. Turn out onto a floured board. Roll to a 1-inch-thick square.
5. Cut into 12 squares. Bake on a cookie sheet, spaced slightly apart, for 12 to 15 minutes.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	153
Total fat	9 g
Protein	4 g
Sodium	348 mg
Carbohydrate	15 g
Dietary fiber	0 g
Saturated fat	4 g
Total sugars	3 g

Source: MyPlate