



Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests – stress and depression. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands – parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, just to name a few. It's no wonder the stress of such a demanding schedule would ruin your holidays and possibly hurt your health.

But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays and you may even end up enjoying them more than you thought you would.

1. **Acknowledge your feelings** – If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it is normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings.
2. **Reach out** – If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others is also a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
3. **Be realistic** – The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to and be open to creating new ones.
4. **Set aside difference** – Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion.
5. **Stick to a budget** – Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.
6. **Plan ahead** – Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
7. **Learn to say no** – Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for lost time.
8. **Don't abandon healthy habits** – Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Try these suggestions:
 - a. Have a healthy snack before holiday parties.
 - b. Get plenty of sleep.
 - c. Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.
9. **Take a breather** – Make some time for yourself. Spending just 5 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do.
10. **Seek professional help** – Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

Live Better Louisiana

Earn your 2020 premium credit in just one step: by completing your preventive health checkup. Blue Cross works with an industry leader, Catapult Health, to bring preventive checkups to a **site near you**. You can schedule a free checkup with a licensed nurse practitioner and health technician through the online scheduler. You'll get **lab-accurate diagnostic tests** and receive a full **Personal Health Report** with checkup results and recommendations.

What do you do? Schedule your appointment online at www.TimeConfirm.com/OGB or call **1-877-841-3058**. Complete your clinic to get the credit. If you are not able to go to a clinic, have your doctor fax a completed Primary Care Provider form, found at info.groupbenefits.org, to Catapult Health.

Upcoming Clinics

Below is a list of clinics scheduled throughout the state. Remember, you have until **August 31, 2019** to get your preventive health checkup in order to be eligible for the 2019 wellness credit!

Live Better Louisiana Clinics	
Date	Location
11/12 – 11/16/2018	University of New Orleans (New Orleans) Central LA Technical Community College (Alexandria)
11/27 – 11/29/2018	Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond) Pennington Center



Omada® is an online program that surrounds you with the tools and support you need to build health habits and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The average Louisiana participant loses almost 9 pounds along the way.

Omada® provides tools to motivate you, peers for encouragement, and a professional health coach to provide daily insights. Along the way you will learn simple rules for better eating fitness, sleep and stress management that will have an immediate impact on the choices you make.

To see if you, or your adult family member, qualify for the program, visit the [Omada®](http://Omada.com) website to take a short screening survey.

Fight the Flu!

Take the time to get a flu vaccine. The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against influenza and its potentially serious complications. Flu vaccination has been shown to prevent flu illnesses, doctor's visits and hospitalizations. See the link below for action you can take to prevent the flu.



Apple Crisp



An apple a day keeps the doctor away, right? Even with all of its decadence, this crisp is still a smart treat.

Ingredients: Filling

5 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, chopped small
1/4 cup finely chopped pecans
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Ingredients: Topping

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/3 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons chilled butter, cut into pieces
1/4 cup coarsely chopped pecans

1. Mix all the filling ingredients together. Place in 7 to 8-ounce ramekins.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F
3. Mix the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Blend the butter into the mixture until it forms pea size lumps. Stir in pecans and sprinkle over filling.
4. Bake crisps for 35-40 minutes. Cool 10 minutes.
5. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

For more information, visit us at www.bcbsla.com/ogb
Follow us on Twitter [@LiveBetterLA](https://twitter.com/LiveBetterLA)