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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

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Know! How To Reduce Holiday Stress

The holidays are meant to be a joy-filled season of gathering with friends and relatives, enjoying festive lights and music, exchanging goodies and giving generously. However, when time and money are stretched, relationships are strained and expectations are not met, what is meant to be a time of celebration may become a time of overwhelming stress, leading many to turn to unhealthy coping behaviors, including alcohol and other drug use.

While it is unrealistic to think we can eliminate holiday stress completely, it is vital to our health and well-being to do what we can to keep it at a minimum.

Take a look at these 10 tips to easing holiday stress:

Organize and Prioritize: Make a detailed list, check it twice, and then prioritize based on what has to get done now versus what can wait or even be skipped altogether.

Don't Overcommit: You may need to graciously turn down a party invitation, and that is ok. Time is precious and so is your sanity.

Keep Gift-Giving in Perspective: While shopping for loved ones is a big holiday stressor, most people cannot even recall what gifts they received (or from whom) last Christmas, kids included.

Deal with Family Dysfunction Delicately: The potential for conflict at an upcoming family get-together can create a great deal of stress. Keep in mind this is not necessarily the time or place to address longstanding family issues. Do your best to avoid the drama, but be prepared to politely excuse yourself if needed.



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Take Social Media with a Grain of Salt: Most people are only going to post pictures that put them in the best light. So you're sure to see photos of friends at holiday parties posing with big smiles, beautifully decorated tables with picture-perfect food, and happy families gathered in front of the fireplace. There is nothing wrong with sharing or looking at such pictures, so long as you keep in mind that you are only seeing people's joyful moments in-between their daily challenges of real life.

Give Yourself a Time Out: Take a break from the swirl of activities by fitting in some quiet time each day. Try reading, meditating or just kicking up your feet for a bit. Your mind and body will benefit.
Make Sleep a Priority: Sleep is food for the soul. Getting plenty of sleep will help to make your spirit bright.

Make Time for Sunshine and Exercise: Step outside – it's amazing what a breath of fresh air and a brisk walk can do for you. Keep it going if you can; regular exercise reduces stress and anxiety.

Be Charitable: If you are in a position to give financially to those in need, go for it. Another great way to give back and make a difference is to volunteer with your children at a local charity.

Focus on Gratitude: Write down the many things you are thankful for and refer to them often to keep your thoughts positive.

May your stress be less and your joy be more this holiday season!
From all of us at Drug Free Action Alliance

Sources: [American Psychological Association \(APA\): Tips for parents on managing holiday stress](#). [Lindsay Holmes, Healthy Living Editor, The Huffington Post: How To Stop Being A Holiday Perfectionist And Have Fun This Year, November 2015](#). [Lindsey Konkel, My Health News Daily Contributor, LiveScience: Holiday Stress Busters, December 2012](#). [Needle: Three Out of Four Consumers Plagued With Holiday Gift Giving Stress, November 19, 2015](#).

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