



The Gift of Health: Tips to Holiday Health and Safety

The holidays are a time to celebrate, give thanks, and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health. Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Protect Yourself



Appropriate hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. When you are sick, stay home and avoid close contact with others. Also, get a flu vaccination, and if you are 65 years of age or older, make sure you've had a pneumococcal vaccination.

Action Steps: Wash your hands for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Sing the Happy Birthday song twice. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. Also, be sure you are up-to-date on your vaccinations.

Preventing the Flu

www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm

Clean Hands Saves Lives

www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/

Scrub Club

www.scrubclub.org/home.php (Non-CDC site)

Stay Warm and Prevent Carbon Monoxide Exposure



What constitutes extreme cold and its effects can vary across the different areas of the country. In regions that may not be accustomed to winter weather, near-freezing temperatures are considered "extreme cold." Exposure to cold temperatures, whether indoors or outdoors, can cause serious or life-threatening health problems. Infants and the elderly are particularly at risk, but anyone can be affected.

To prevent accidental carbon monoxide poisoning, have your heating system, water heater, and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.

Action Steps: Plan ahead. If you plan to use a wood stove, fireplace, or space heater, be extremely careful and follow the manufacturer's instructions on proper use. Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911.

Your ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age, and older people are more susceptible to health problems caused by cold. If you are more than 65 years old, place an easy-to-read thermometer in an indoor location where you will see it frequently, and check the temperature of your home often during the winter months.

Extreme Cold: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp

Winter Weather

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/

You Can Prevent Carbon Monoxide Exposure

www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm

Manage Stress



Breathe. Keep a check on anxiety, over commitment, over spending, and striving for perfection. Ease the load you carry. Between work and home, the holidays don't need to adversely affect your health.

Action Steps: Balance work, home, and personal life. Develop a support network. Start a new holiday tradition – plan ahead, stay relaxed, and be stress-free!

Stress...At Work

www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html

Managing Caregiver Stress during the Holidays

www.adsa.dshs.wa.gov/topics/caregiving/holidays.htm (Non-CDC site)

Managing Stress: A Juggling Act

www.4woman.gov/pypth/articles/aa_mental_stress.html (Non-CDC site)

Travel Safely



Whether it's across town or around the world, take the few extra minutes to make the trip unforgettable... in a good way.

If you are traveling in extreme cold, check and restock the winter emergency supplies in your car before you leave, do not travel in low visibility conditions, and avoid traveling on ice-covered roads, overpasses, and bridges if at all possible.

Don't drink and drive. Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes kill someone every 30 minutes and non-fatally injure someone every two minutes. During 2003, 17,013 people in the U.S. died in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, representing 40% of all traffic-related deaths. In 2002, about 1.5 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics.

Action Steps: Don't drink and drive. Wear seat belts. Bundle up. Listen for radio or television reports of travel advisories issued by the National Weather Service.

Extreme Cold: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/guide.asp

Impaired Driving

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/drving.htm

Older Adult Drivers

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/older.htm

Teen Drivers

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/teenmvh.htm

Traumatic Occupational Injuries: Motor Vehicles

www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumamv.html

Travelers' Health

www.cdc.gov/travel/

Tips for Parents and Grandparents about Alcohol and Children

www.madd.org/under21/0,1056,6679,00.html (Non-CDC site)

Be Smoke-Free



There are millions of people alive today who have learned to face life without a cigarette. For staying healthy, quitting smoking is the best step you can take.

Action Steps: Take quitting one day at a time, or one hour at a time—whatever you need to succeed. For smokers who want to quit, resources are available to help, including the national network of quitlines at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Quit Tips

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit/quittip.htm

You Can Quit Smoking Now!

www.smokefree.gov (Non-CDC site)

Watch the Kids and Their Toys



Toys, holiday decorations, and travel are a few areas to pay special attention to during the holidays...and all year long. Injuries can be prevented if you take certain precautions.

Action Steps: Keep dangerous toys, foods, and household items out of reach. Learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking.

Child Passenger Safety

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/childpas.htm

Choking Episodes among Children

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/spotlite/choking.htm

Toy Safety Shopping Tips

<http://cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/grand/toy/toysafe.html> (Non-CDC site)

Prevent Injuries



Take precautions to protect yourself from injuries, including those from residential fires, fireworks, and falls while decorating for the holidays.

Most residential fires occur during the winter months, and alcohol use contributes to an estimated 40% of residential fire deaths. Cooking is the primary cause of residential fires, and smoking is the leading cause of residential fire-related deaths. In 2003, an estimated 9,300 were treated in emergency departments for fireworks-related injuries.

During 2000-2003, an estimated 17,465 persons were treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments for holiday decorating-related falls. The majority of falls were from ladders, roofs, furniture, stairs, and porches.

Action Steps: Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home, including the basement. Be sure to place smoke alarms near rooms where people sleep.

Leave the fireworks to the professionals.

Recognize the possibility of falls, use ladders safely, and use safer alternatives such as step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations.

Fall-Related Injuries during the Holiday Season- United States, 2000-2003

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5348a1.htm

Fire Deaths and Injuries

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/fire.htm

Fire Deaths and Injuries: Prevention Tips

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/fireprevention.htm

Fireworks-Related Injuries

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/fworks.htm

Christmas Tree Tips

www.nsc.org/library/facts/xmastree.htm (Non-CDC site)

Holiday Season Safety

<http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/holseasn.htm> (Non-CDC site)

Handle and Prepare Food Safely



Many people do not think about food safety until a food-related illness affects them or a family member. While the food supply in the United States is one of the safest in the world, CDC estimates that 76 million people get sick, more than 300,000 are hospitalized, and 5,000 Americans die each year from foodborne illness. Preventing foodborne illness and death remains a major public health challenge.

Action Step: Cook food immediately after defrosting. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

Holiday Cooking: Keeping It Safe!

www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/holidaycook.htm

Fight Bac! Keep Food Safe from Bacteria
www.fightbac.org/main.cfm (Non-CDC site)

Eat Healthy and Get Moving



During the holiday season, we tend to eat and drink more calories. As you enjoy the holidays, remember to eat in moderation and stay physically active.

Action Step: Serve bowls of fresh fruit as a festive and sweet substitute for candy or chocolates.

Healthy Eating Tips: Variety, Balance, and Moderation

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/nutrition_for_everyone/quick_tips/index.htm

Holidays the Healthy Way

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/spotlights/holiday_tips.htm

Physical Activity: Energize Your Life!

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm

Now Relax and Have Fun!

You've taken steps to make sure that everything and everybody is safe and healthy. Enjoy the holidays and make sure you take some time for yourself.

*Being healthy takes practice.
Practice prevention. Prevention works!*

For more information about health, visit www.cdc.gov.

