

# What to do if the holidays make you blue

The holiday season is supposed to be a wonderful time of year, filled with family gatherings, festive parties, and messages of cheer.

The additional tasks the season brings and tensions that can accompany get-togethers may make it depressing rather than joyful, however. Feelings of loneliness, sadness, frustration, and depression may emerge.

Taking preventive measures can ease some of the negative feelings the holidays bring. To take some of the strain out of the season:

**Organize your time:** Set up a reasonable schedule with days for shopping, decorating, and visiting.

**Practice healthy habits:** Exercise each day and make sleep a priority. Practice moderation at the table. Bring a healthy snack to a holiday party or eat some fruit or veggies before heading out so you're less likely to indulge in less healthy foods.

**Be practical:** Don't worry about following every tradition or attending every party. Schedules shift, people move, and children get married. Focus on doing what fits your lifestyle this year.

**Don't go it alone:** If the family's holiday party is your responsibility, look to others for help. Try a pot-luck meal, or offer guests the option of helping with food, decorating, or clean-up.

**Realize you're not the only one:** It's not unusual for feelings of unhappiness to surface during the holiday season. While these feelings are unpleasant, they're not uncommon. In fact, other family members or friends may also be going through a difficult time. It can help to try to be understanding.

**Find support:** Talk about concerns with family members or a good friend. If you'll be alone for the holidays, a community or religious group may offer an opportunity for companionship. Look for volunteer opportunities as a way to connect with others and give back to the community.

**Get help:** If you experience extremely negative behavior during the holidays, including excessive alcohol use, overwhelming fatigue, anger, or isolating behavior, look for a place to get help. A community group, health care professional, or support group can offer assistance in getting through what may be a difficult season.

  
Your Health and Wellness Awareness Program



## Additional Resources



National Institute of Mental Health, “**5 Things You Should Know About Stress,**” [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

This fact sheet offers information about stress, how it impacts your health, and what you can do about it.

National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health, “Relaxation Techniques for Health,”  
<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm>

This website from the National Institutes of Health provides information about relaxation techniques and research studies on the topic.