

HOW TO HAVE HEALTHIER HOLIDAYS IN 1-2-3!

Stay Active

Even a few minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity can deliver some health benefits and count toward reaching the recommendations. For adults, the many benefits of physical activity include reduced short-term feelings of anxiety and better sleep.

Some tips for staying active during the holidays include:

- When shopping, walk a few laps around the shopping center before going into stores.
- Take the stairs at every opportunity. If you can't climb all the stairs, take the stairs part way, then the elevator.
- Rather than hunting for the closest parking spot, park farther away and walk briskly to your destination.
- When friends and family gather, go for a group walk. You can make the walk more fun by turning it into a scavenger hunt.
- Play an active group game in your yard or local park.
- Bundle up and take a walk instead of a drive to see holiday lights.

Eat Healthy

Eating well supports muscles and bones, boosts immunity, helps the digestive system, and aids in weight management, among other health benefits for children and adults. Good nutrition involves eating a variety of healthy foods. To do that during the holidays:

- If you eat foods that are high in calories, saturated fat, or added sugars, choose small portions and only eat them once in a while. Opt for healthier foods most of the time.



Image from Festive Dining Table with Glazed Ham and Vegetable Dishes Free Stock Photo | Freemages

- At parties and other gatherings, fill your plate with your favorite fruits and vegetables first, then add small portions of less healthy items.
- If you are taking food to a party, make it your favorite healthy dish. Then you'll be sure that at least one item at the party will be a healthy choice that you enjoy.
 - Make healthier versions of your traditional recipes by using ingredients with less fat and salt.
 - Spice up baked fish or chicken by adding salsa or black bean sauce.
 - Consider beans in place of higher-fat meats.
- Fill your plate with vegetables and lean protein.

Plan activities that don't involve eating

Here are some ideas for shifting the focus away from food during the holiday season: Volunteer in your community.

- Try a seasonal activity such as ice skating or winter hiking.
- Go on a walk and explore a new area with a friend or family member.
- Visit that museum or exhibit you've been wanting to see.
- Consider what new healthy traditions you can start this year. The possibilities are endless!

Source:: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/about/healthier-holidays-in-1-2-3.html>

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Health & Human Science News

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2025

- 10 Extension Homemakers Executive Committee - 2:00PM
- 10 Extension Homemakers Presidents Committee - 3:00PM
- 11 Veterans Days - **Office Closed**
- 19 ServSafe Training/Exam in Wells County
- 27-28 **Office Closed** - Thanksgiving
- 10 & 17 "Where Does Your Money Go?"
- 25 & 12.2 "Where Does Your Money Go?"

December 2025

- 2 Extension Homemakers Holiday Luncheon
- 24 Christmas Eve - **Office Closed**
- 25 Christmas - **Office Closed**

December 2025

- 1 New Years Day - **Office Closed**
- 12 Extension Homemakers Executive Committee - 2:00PM
- 12 Extension Homemakers Presidents Committee - 3:00PM
- 19 MLK Jr. Day - **Office Closed**



ServSafe Training Offered

Purdue Cooperative Extension Service will be offering several area Retail Food Certification class's in 2025. This is for food handlers who need to obtain a Retail Food Certificate. Class information for the remainder of the year is listed below.

For more information, go to: <https://www.purdue.edu/servsafe> or contact the Purdue Education Store—phone: 765-494-6794 or email: edstore@purdue.edu

Date	Location	Description	Time	Registration Link
November 17	Steuben County Extension Office 317 S. Wayne St., Angola, IN 46703	1-day Training/Exam	9 AM—4 PM Exam @ 4 PM	https://cvent.me/X7BoE1
November 19	Well Co. Community Center 1240 4-H Park Rd., Bluffton IN 46714	1-day Training/Exam	9 AM—4 PM Exam @ 4 PM	https://cvent.me/4IKN0w
December 16	Allen County Extension Office 4001 Crescent Ave., Fort Wayne, IN	1-day Training/Exam	9 AM—4 PM Exam @ 4 PM	https://cvent.me/lAzlWa

Supporting Your Mental Health During the Holiday Season

By: Tanner Bommersbach, M.D., M.P.H., Policy Fellow, Center for Mental Health Services

In the 2003 holiday movie classic, “Elf,” the main character, Buddy, shares a particular fondness for the holiday season, “The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!” No matter what traditions you celebrate this winter, not everyone shares Buddy’s enthusiasm for this season. While the holidays can be a time of celebration and joy for many, it also can be a period of stress, sadness, and loneliness for others—and sometimes can be particularly difficult for people living with mental health and substance use conditions.

A survey* conducted by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that 64 percent of individuals living with a mental illness reported that their conditions worsened around the holidays. Whether due to separation from loved ones, personal grief, the pressures of gift-giving, economic hardship, challenging interactions with family members, or shorter days, this time of year can bring unique behavioral health challenges.

As we approach the holiday season, it is important to remember that it is very common to feel added stress — and this stress can worsen symptoms of a mental health condition, such as depression or anxiety, or a substance use disorder. However, there are ways to help address the stress or condition and improve your mental health. Below are strategies to help you find moments of joy amidst the hustle and bustle this holiday season.

Strategies for supporting your mental health:

1. **Pay attention to your feelings** Remember that it is okay to feel unhappy during the holidays. Recognizing your feelings is the first step to addressing and nurturing them.
2. **Develop a plan for when you are feeling stressed, sad, or lonely** This plan may include calling a friend or family member, going for a walk, engaging in an activity that brings joy, or watching a favorite movie. Having a plan ahead of time can help ensure the difficult moments are more manageable.
3. **Practice self-care** It is important to schedule time for yourself and activities that recharge your mind and body. This may include reading a good book, working out, spending time in nature, and practicing stress management skills, such as deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness. It is also important to remember to prioritize necessities, including eating a balanced diet, getting plenty of sleep, and finding time for exercise.
4. **Connect with community** If you can’t be near loved ones during the holidays, finding a supportive community through clubs, support groups, community centers, local meetups, and faith communities can help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation. Consider scheduling a regular phone call with family and friends as well.
5. **Support others** During this time of year feelings of grief and loss can amplify. Check in on loved ones who may be alone or struggling during the holiday season. Helping a friend or neighbor not only gives joy to others, but it can improve your own happiness and well-being.

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"Supporting Your Mental Health During the Holiday Season"

5. **Support others** During this time of year feelings of grief and loss can amplify. Check in on loved ones who may be alone or struggling during the holiday season. Helping a friend or neighbor not only gives joy to others, but it can improve your own happiness and well-being.

6. **Recognize seasonal mood changes** Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a condition in which people experience symptoms of depression that are triggered by the change in seasons as the days get shorter. While this form of depression often improves in the spring and summer, it is important to talk with your health care provider if you feel you are experiencing these symptoms. Treatment is effective and may include light therapy, antidepressant medication, and/or talk therapy.

7. **Avoid alcohol and drugs** For people in recovery, the holiday season presents challenges that can trigger the use of alcohol and drugs. Having a plan for navigating social events and feelings of loneliness, can reduce the risk of substance use. For family and friends, it is important to check in on those who may be struggling with substance use over the holidays.

Know when to seek help If you feel that your mental health struggles are becoming overwhelming and difficult to handle, it is important to seek help and know that treatment is available. Below are free and confidential resources that can connect you with effective treatment and support.

You are not alone. Here's how to seek help.

SAMHSA's National Helpline — 1-800-662-HELP (4357) - A confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.



Photo from Close-up of hands clasped in support Free Stock Photo | Freelmages

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — If you or someone you know needs support now, you can contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Simply call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org.

Veterans Crisis Line — Reach caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are Veterans themselves. Dial 988 then press 1.

Source: <https://www.samhsa.gov/blog/supporting-your-mental-health-during-holiday-season>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Where Does Your Money Go?

How you handle money impacts your financial stability. Join Molly Hoag, Health and Human Sciences Educator, to learn about smart money habits that help you stay in control of your finances.

YOU WILL LEARN SMART MONEY HABITS LIKE:

- Keeping track of what you spend
- Finding where you're spending too much
- Knowing the difference between what you need and what you want
- Setting clear financial goals in writing
- Making a plan to spend and save wisely

Workshops

Must Attend Both Dates Per Class

Class A

- Session 1 - November 10 @6:00PM
- Session 2 - November 17 @6:00PM

Contact 260-824-6412 by Nov 5 to sign up

Class B

- Session 1 - November 25 @6:00PM
- Session 2 - December 2 @6:00PM

Contact 260-824-6412 by Nov 19 to sign up



Extension Homemakers Holiday Luncheon

12/2/25

11:00AM

Details to follow.



PRESSURE CANNER TESTING

Pressure canner testing is now available again at the Wells County Extension Office.

Drop off your dial gauge pressure canner at the Extension Office M-F, 8AM—4:30 PM. We will call you to pick it up once it's been tested.

Brands we test: Presto, National, Magic Seal, Maid of Honor

Canners can be dropped off at the Wells County Community Center, 1240 4-H Park Road, Bluffton.

Cost for the inspection is \$5.00.





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If you are in need of accommodations to attend this program, please contact Molly Hoag prior to the meeting at 260-824-6412 at least 2 weeks before the program date. For special dietary needs contact Molly Hoag at 260-824-6412 at least 2 weeks before the program date.

If you need an interpreter or translator, please contact Molly Hoag at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting at 260-824-6412

This bi-monthly publication is an educational service of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service—Wells County. Additional copies are available from the Wells County office located at 1240 4-H Park Road, Bluffton, IN within the Wells Co. 4-H Park.

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