

Avoid the Holiday Blues

Tips for Finding Joy and Balance this Holiday Season

Here are some tips for finding joy and balance during the holiday season:

1. Don't get hung up on what the holidays are supposed to be. Take them as they come and enjoy the season.

2. Do something different, as the usual routine may cause dread and depression. Consider a low key Christmas Day at a movie theater or donate money to charity instead of exchanging gifts.

3. Lean on your support system. Having a network of close companions that you get together with during the holiday season can help keep you centered and keep spirits high

4. Forget the unimportant stuff. Don't worry about the things you can't get done. Enjoy the things you are able to accomplish and forget the rest



5. Volunteer. Time is limited, but volunteering to help others with less than you may be rewarding and allow you to appreciate and enjoy the holidays more

6. Head off problems. Think about what causes you stress and change the situation.

7. Ask for help. Delegate tasks to others, but be specific. This will free up your time and allow others to feel that they are being helpful.

8. Don't stress about things you cannot control. Control your actions and reactions, but remember you cannot control others

9. Make new family traditions. Create a family tradition that has meaning to you.

10. Find positive ways to remember loved ones. Do something fun in memory of a loved one. For example, go to your loved ones favorite restaurant with family and have a toast.

11. Don't overbook. Limit yourself to the events that are important to you. Remember it is okay to say no.

12. Don't stay longer than you want. When going to a holiday event it is okay to drop by, say hi and leave. Knowing you have a plan for leaving will reduce anxiety

13. Forget about the perfect gift. Remember the holidays are about family and spirit

14. Stay on budget. Don't cause yourself depression over spending too much this season. Plan ahead and stick to it.

(Continued on Back Cover)



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(Continued from Inside Flap)

15. Stay on schedule. Stick to your regular schedule as much as possible. Deviating from your normal routine can lead to sleep deprivation, which can cause your mood to deteriorate

16. Exercise. Exercise has an anti-anxiety, anti-depression effect. Something as simple as walking a couple extra laps at the mall can boost your mood.

17. Eat sensibly. Eating healthy helps you feel better physically and emotionally. With all of the gifts and parties it is hard to eat healthy, but eat sensibly around the holiday events and your mood will be lifted.

18. Don't rely on holiday spirits for mood elevation. Many turn to alcohol or other substances to deal with their depression during the holidays. Alcohol should be in moderation as it is a depressant and overdoing it will leave you feeling worse.

19. Try a sun lamp. With the shorter daylight hours, many feel in a slump. A sun lamp can improve your mood.

20. If you take medications, don't miss doses. Missing doses can cause depression or other serious health problems.

21. If you see a therapist, schedule extra sessions to help get through the holidays. We all need extra help sometimes.

22. Give yourself a break. This is the season of kindness and forgiveness and we need to remember to turn it on us as well as others. Many dwell on their mistakes and imperfections, which can lead to anxiety and depression. Remember to be kind to yourself and enjoy the season.



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A Quarterly Newsletter from Cucamonga Valley Medical Group
News You Can Use for Your Health and Well Being

Happy Holidays from CVMG

Welcoming You to the End of the Year!

This time of the year brings a joyful holiday season for many. It can also be filled with stress, financial vows, health concerns, and perhaps remind us of those that are no longer here to spend the holidays with. So let the CVMG family help you find joy through the rest of 2015 and ring in 2016 with happiness. Come in today to get that physical you've been talking about all year, tune up those lab values you promised yourself you would last New Years, or talk about ways to fight stress, overeating, and holiday blues.



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- **Happy Holidays from CVMG**- Welcoming You to the End of the Year!
- **Avoid the Holiday Blues**- Tips for Finding Joy and Balance this Holiday Season

- **When Is It Too Much**- Holiday Heart Syndrome
- **A Balanced New Year**- Some Tips to Make 2016 a Better Year

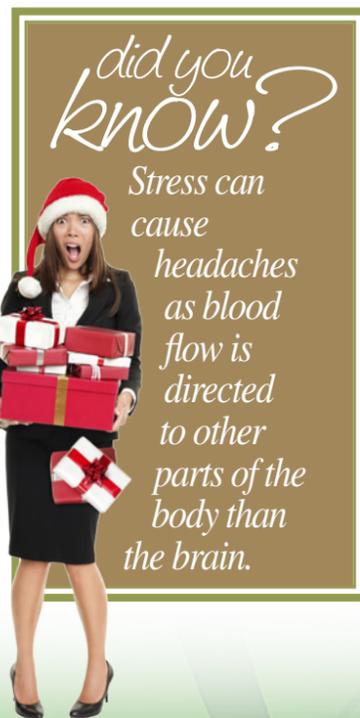


When Is It Too Much? Holiday Heart Syndrome

For many the holidays are a time of warmth, relaxation and indulgence. While the festivities of the season can bring us a sense of happiness and well-being, the overindulgence and stress that often accompanies these events can be detrimental to cardiovascular health. Even for otherwise healthy individuals, overeating and drinking too much alcohol can lead to rhythm disturbances such as atrial fibrillation and tachycardias. This effect was first described as Holiday Heart syndrome in 1978 by cardiologist Dr. Philip Eddinger, who studied specific cases of heart rhythm disturbance in known alcoholics after they had undergone a weekend or "holiday" binge. The key to understanding the effects of this syndrome lies in understanding the effects of alcohol within the body. Upon consumption, alcohol releases chemicals that cause less efficient circulation. Alcohol also causes an increase in sympathetic output (think flight or fight chemicals epinephrine and norepinephrine), which causes it to pump faster and work harder. In addition to

this, by-products of the alcohol itself can cause an irregular heartbeat. Alcohol also causes a shift in the amount of sodium across our cell membranes, which can also contribute to these rhythm abnormalities. These effects coupled with the increased work placed on the heart by overeating creates a recipe for disaster.

One of the more dangerous rhythm abnormalities that can occur in Holiday Heart syndrome is atrial fibrillation, which prevents the heart from establishing a



did you know?
Stress can cause headaches as blood flow is directed to other parts of the body than the brain.

regular pace and can lead to the formation of blood clots and strokes. The combination of excessive amounts of food and alcohol may present a problem even for those who don't regularly overindulge. People who consume more than two drinks per day have up to 2-fold increase in high blood pressure compared to those who do not drink alcohol. Additionally, heavy or binge-type drinking may be less than you think; three or more drinks a day for women and four or more for men. The rhythm abnormality usually resolves within 24 hours in otherwise healthy persons, but may require the use of rate or rhythm control medications.

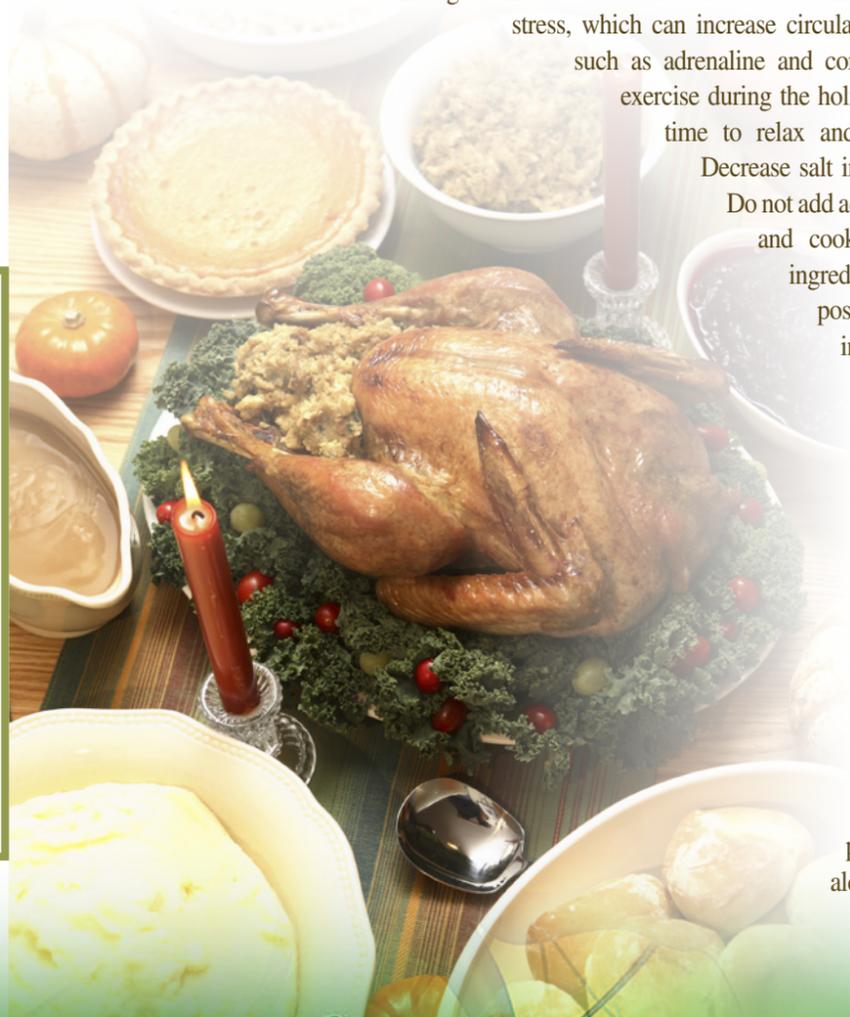
Most episodes of holiday heart syndrome, or more formerly "alcoholic cardiomyopathy" resolve when the effects of the alcohol wear off; but for those who have pre-existing health conditions, the effects can be permanent and even fatal. To protect yourself from the dreaded effects of Holiday Heart this season, keep the following advice in mind: Monitor alcohol intake and do not binge drink. Limit to 1 or 2 drinks per day, especially if you already have existing hypertension, heart disease, obesity or other health issues. Don't overindulge in food at one sitting.



did you know?
Singing exercises your heart, lungs, and releases endorphins which elevates your mood. So turn up the holiday tunes and start your own version of caroling.

Eating too much at one time can cause abdominal distention. Avoid stress, which can increase circulating catecholamines, such as adrenaline and cortisol. Get plenty of exercise during the holiday season and take time to relax and time for yourself. Decrease salt intake when possible.

Do not add additional salt to foods and cook with low sodium ingredients whenever possible. Limit caffeine intake, which can also cause palpitations or rapid heart rate. Beware of sneaky sources in tea, decaf coffee, chocolate, soda, even over the counter medications. Lastly, be sure to drink plenty of water, especially while exercising and periodically during alcohol consumption.



A Balanced New Year Some Tips to Make 2016 a Better Year

So you survived the holidays. You exercised, ate sensibly and didn't overindulge. You managed the stress and are feeling optimistic for the New Year, so how do you keep that momentum going and Start 2016 Right? Make the year 2016 all about balance and moderation.

Don't focus on dieting, focus on eating:

- Use the rule **5-2-1-0**
 - ~ Eat **5** fruits or vegetables per day
 - ~ **2** hours or less of recreational screen time (that includes TV, computer or video game time)
 - ~ **1** hour or more of physical activity per day
 - ~ Drink **0** sugary drinks, drink more water or flavored seltzer, or drink water with added low calorie additives like Crystal Light
- Eat real food, watch the portions, turn off the TV, sit down and eat
- When grocery shopping, avoid the middle aisles in the grocery store. That's where you find the "junk food" and processed food. Shop along the border of the grocery stores where you find the fruits, vegetables and meats.

Quick exercise changes or strategies you can implement include:

- Take a brisk dog walk 15 minutes in the morning and evening regardless of the weather 7 days a week
- Take the stairs - one flight up, two flights down
- Park along the perimeter of the parking lots and walk to the entrance of the stores
- Get some yard work done - 1 hour a day per week, increase that to 2 hours for lighter intensity work
- Avoid sitting for long stretches
 - ~ Prolonged sitting is known to be a risk factor for weight gain
 - ~ Set an alarm on your phone to remind yourself to stand at least once an hour
- Find a gym partner, set a date, announce it to family and friends so they can keep you accountable

Other ways to keep a healthy balance:

- Sleep 8 hours per night
- Consider acupuncture and massage for chronic problems
 - If you smoke, quit. Start smoking less today, ask your provider about ways to help you quit
 - Stay in touch, reconnect and renew old relationships
 - Find a way to limit the stress, try monthly massages, try a new workout routine, go on weekly hikes or bike rides
 - Volunteer some time at a local church or charity
 - Travel the world
 - Try new hobbies, find new adventures

Keep your expectations or "resolutions" realistic. No one is perfect, we all have splurges. Overall if you are eating well and maintaining an active lifestyle 80% of the time, then you can reach for some birthday cake, have a movie marathon, miss a couple of zzz's and enjoy life worry free the other 20% of the time. Remember to formulate a specific plan for your age, health status, chronic conditions and medications with your primary care provider for goal-specific diet modifications and activities that keep you healthy and happy.

Focus on learning, loving, growing and serving. Invest your energy in the positive present moment.

Happy Holidays and a Bright New Year
from Your Primary Care Providers and Staff at Cucamonga Valley Medical Group.

