



For Immediate Release:

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Tips for Staying Healthy During the Holiday Season “12 Days of Healthy Holiday Tips” from LA County Public Health

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health released 12 tips to stay in positive spirits and in good health during the holiday season. This is part of Public Health’s ongoing efforts to help residents eat healthy, move more and live tobacco-free. The 12 Healthy Holiday tips provide small steps that can help make the holiday season safer, healthier and more enjoyable.

“The holidays are a busy time of year, but that doesn’t mean you should put your health on hold,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “Continue to enjoy those once-a-year holiday treats, just choose smaller portions. You can incorporate short bursts of fitness into your regular routine, whether it’s taking the stairs at the mall or turning your holiday cleaning into a workout. Instead of just gifts, share good health practices during this holiday season.”

12 Days of Healthy Holiday Tips:

- 1. Enjoy those once-a-year holiday treats – just eat less of them.** It’s possible to indulge without packing on the holiday pounds. Choose the items you can’t live without, and enjoy them in smaller portions. Choose Less, Weigh Less.
- 2. Get moving – and not just at the gym.** Park your car further away from the entrance of the grocery store or shopping mall to get more steps in your day. Take the stairs at the shopping mall instead of the elevator or escalator. Turn your holiday cleaning into a workout: mop floors, clean windows, rake leaves, wash the car or even walk the dog. Another fun way to get exercise during the holidays: dance along to your favorite holiday tunes.
- 3. Decorate safely.** Holidays are the time to bring out the tinsel and lights, but accidents can happen when decorations go awry. Use flame-resistant or non-combustible materials to trim a tree. Check for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wire and loose connections before plugging in holiday lights. When you leave your home or go to bed, be sure to turn off all holiday lights.
- 4. Manage your stress.** The holidays don’t need to take a toll on your health. Be mindful about overcommitting and overspending to reduce your stress level. Balance work, home and holiday parties. Set realistic expectations for yourself and your family this holiday season. And above all, try to get enough sleep each night to stay well-rested, refreshed and in the holiday spirit.
- 5. Wash your hands.** Going shopping or traveling to grandmother’s house this holiday season? Watch out for those pesky germs. Germs can survive on door handles, railings and other



surfaces you touch with your hands. After being in crowded places like the mall, and always before eating, remember to wash your hands with warm water and soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

6. **Don't skip meals to save calories for later.** Skipping meals can cause you to overeat later. You may want to eat a piece of fruit or a handful of nuts before heading out to a holiday gathering to tame your hunger. Go ahead and enjoy those once-a-year holiday treats, just eat in moderation and choose smaller portions. Choose Less, Weigh Less.
7. **Do something for someone else.** Elevate your mood with something that doesn't take a lot of time, or cost a lot of money this holiday season. Remember others by donating to a charity, volunteering your time at a senior home, serving a meal to a hungry family, giving to a food pantry or sponsoring another family's holiday dinner. You might enjoy giving back so much that it becomes a year-round habit.
8. **Eating healthy isn't just about nutrition, although it's important.** Keep your guests happy and in holiday cheer. Avoid food borne illness by washing fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly, separating raw meat and poultry from other food, and using separate cutting boards, knives and platters to prepare meats. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. When in doubt, throw it out.
9. **Practice safety first this holiday season.** Shop with a friend, park in a well-lit space, don't leave shopping bags in plain sight, avoid carrying large amounts of cash, be extra careful when carrying a wallet or purse and don't overburden yourself with too many packages. Be alert and aware of your surroundings during the holiday hustle and bustle.
10. **Drink up – water, that is.** Did you know that there are 22 packets of sugar in a regular 20-ounce soda can? You wouldn't eat that much sugar, so why would you drink it? Limit eggnog and alcohol as well, which can have just as many calories as soda. Try water, unsweetened tea, or low-fat milk for a satisfying thirst quencher that won't pour on the pounds.
11. **Don't let holiday stress allow you to give in to your cigarette craving.** Instead, brush your teeth, drink a glass of water, take deep breaths, chew on a cinnamon stick or sugar-free gum, or go for a walk. Cravings usually only last a couple of minutes and you can get through it. Right now, LA County residents can get free nicotine patches by calling the California Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-NO-BUTTS.
12. **Give the gift of health.** Start new holiday traditions with family and friends that are centered on eating healthy, moving more and living tobacco-free. Cook healthy dishes together, play a family-friendly sport, or try something new, like ice skating together, or taking a walk to view holiday lights instead of driving. Small steps can add up to big improvements for you and your family's health, and that's a gift worth giving this year.

If you would like to download the **12 Days of Healthy Holiday Tips** infographic, visit <http://www.choosehealthla.com/eat-healthy/portion-control/healthy-holiday-tips/>. For more tips



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on how to stay healthy during the holidays, visit Choose Health LA on Twitter [@ChooseHealthLA](#), on [Facebook](#) and at [ChooseHealthLA.com](#).

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

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