
News Release

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For Immediate Release

Local family medicine provider shares five ways to have a stress-free holiday

NEW PRAGUE, Minn. — Stress comes in all shapes and sizes, and is triggered by many different situations. The holidays, although meant to be enjoyable, often evoke high stress levels in many people. So how can you keep your cool over the next few weeks? Stephanie Kivi, M.D., a family physician at Mayo Clinic Health System, shares five strategies to help you send stress packing so that you can focus on the joys of the season.

1. **Move.** Physical activity can relieve stress. Movement releases feel-good endorphins directly into the blood stream, which can improve your mood. Whether it's going for a light jog or taking the stairs a few times during the day, the key is to get moving.
2. **Breathe.** Just 3 minutes of deep breathing can turn stress into a feeling of tranquility. Not to mention, deep breathing brings oxygen to energy-building muscles, making all of your cells happy.
3. **Be positive.** Long lines at the store or traffic jams can put anyone in a bad mood. Instead of getting grouchy, try this simple exercise: replace any negative thought with three positive thoughts. Research shows that this can lead to an increased life span, immunity against illnesses, and physical and psychological well-being.
4. **Laugh.** Laughter causes physical changes in the body that promote health. Watch a funny movie or TV show with your family and feel the stress dissipate with each chuckle.
5. **Express gratitude.** Being grateful doesn't mean denying what is going on in our lives, but rather focusing on all of the good that surrounds us. It's refreshing to count your blessings as opposed to being negative.

Cheer and enjoyment during the holiday season don't need to be lost because of stress. Try these five strategies when you're feeling overwhelmed or emotionally drained. You'll quickly realize that peace and serenity are much more fulfilling than stress.

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Mayo Clinic Health System consists of Mayo-owned clinics, hospitals and other health care facilities that serve the health care needs of people in more than 70 communities in Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The community-based providers, paired with the resources and expertise of Mayo Clinic, enable patients in the region to receive the highest quality health care close to home.