

5 Tips



to Help You Stay Healthy Through the Holidays

'Tis the season for friends, family and food! As you celebrate the holidays with those you love, here are a few suggestions from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and your friends at Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital about how to stay healthy and safe through December and into the new year.

mindful eating when it comes to partaking in your favorite seasonal desserts. And avoid skipping meals to save up calories for a big feast, as that can be counterproductive and lead to overeating.



1. **Get your flu shot!**

Before you start making the rounds at parties, be sure your vaccines are up to date by talking with your primary care provider or visiting your local pharmacy. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older receive an annual flu vaccine, and you can further reduce your risk

of illness by remembering to wash your hands often. Also, don't forget that COVID vaccination boosters are available.

2. Indulge wisely. Temptation abounds during the holidays, so it's smart to think ahead and go to parties with a plan — especially if you're managing diabetes or other chronic illnesses. Drink water and limit your alcohol intake. Load up at least half your plate with nonstarchy veggies. Avoid blood-sugar spikes by sticking to your usual mealtimes. Practice



3. Stick to your bedtime. We all know sleep matters, so aim for seven to eight hours a night. Getting extra rest will make it easier to avoid mindless eating and manage any stress that arises during the holidays.

4. Stay active. Movement is your friend, so look for opportunities to walk off those extra calories and regulate your moods. Even better, take advantage of the mental and physical benefits of group exercise, and encourage your loved ones to go on an after-dinner walk with you. Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital's 56-acre campus offers gardens and miles of walking trails that are open to the public and connected to other trail systems. Scan this QR code to access a trail map.



5. Manage stress. Let's face it: Most of us will feel overwhelmed, stressed out or lonely a few times during the holiday season. So if you feel your inner Grinch starting to show up, remember to take a break, find support or go for a walk. Managing your expectations and identifying healthy coping strategies ahead of time also can be helpful. Scan this QR code to access



mindfulness meditations you can use in difficult situations.

Most important, remember to have fun, practice gratitude and savor those moments of beauty with friends and family. Be safe and stay well to better enjoy the happiest of holiday celebrations.

➔ Visit mjhfoundation.org/healthyliving for more tips and free resources from Sentara's Starr Hill community health team.

