



Stay Safe This Holiday Season

The holidays mean many things: turkey, tradition, and gathering with loved ones; but they can also mean accidental house fires. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, December is the deadliest month for electrical fires. That's why it's a good time of year to check the batteries on smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, and make sure there is a working smoke alarm on every level of your home. Have a professional inspect your furnace, clean out air ducts, and sweep the chimney before use. Practicing fire safety and teaching children to do the same can save lives.

Avoid These Home Hazards

Decorating your home can inspire fond memories and nostalgia of childhood.

However, one-third of home decoration fires are started by candles, and two of every five decoration fires happen because décor is placed too close to a heat source, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Avoid these hazards by placing trees at least three feet away from fireplaces and heaters. Don't place a tree in a doorway so that it blocks the exit.

FIRE SAFETY TIPS

When decorating, keep these tips in mind:

- Make sure artificial trees and greenery are labeled "fire resistant."
- Keep live trees watered and away from open candles. Cut off two inches of the trunk for better water absorption. Don't put trees, wreaths

or wrapping paper in the fireplace. Use a screen on the fireplace at all times when a fire is burning.

- Never leave candles or fireplaces burning unattended or when you are asleep.
- Never connect extension cords. Use a single cord that is long enough to reach the outlet without stretching.
- Turn off decorative lights before leaving home or going to sleep. Check lights regularly for exposed or frayed wires and loose connections.

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

As you prepare holiday meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness.



- 1. CLEAN.** Wash hands and surfaces often with hot, soapy water (before, during and after preparing food). Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water. Germs that cause food poisoning can survive in many places and spread around your kitchen.
- 2. SEPARATE.** Avoid cross-contamination

by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces.

- 3. COOK.** Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature. Proper cooking ensures a high enough temperature to kill germs that can make

you sick. You cannot tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture.

- 4. CHILL.** Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours. Keep your refrigerator below 40°F and know when to throw food out.

Maintain, Don't Gain

During the holidays, many people struggle with the ongoing challenge of healthy eating. The average American gains one to two pounds every year between Halloween and New Year's Day. But is there a way to balance enjoying holiday goodies and not expand our waistlines?

Simple ways to stay active are to park farther away from store entrances, take the stairs when possible, and take a few extra laps around the mall when shopping.

Using ingredients such

as low-fat or non-fat milk instead of cream and switching to whole-grain breads and pastas when possible allows you to avoid unhealthy ingredients without abstaining from your favorite dishes. Savor a slice of pumpkin pie, but serve yourself smaller portions of foods high in fat and sugar content. Try new recipes with dark, leafy greens, squashes and root vegetables the whole family can enjoy.

Going to a party? Keep these tips in mind:

- Eat small, low-calorie meals earlier in the day. Don't arrive at a party hungry.
- Choose boiled shrimp or veggies and a little dip instead of cheese or fried foods. And watch your intake of fat and "empty calories" that can be found in sweets, eggnog and dressing.
- If you drink alcohol, limit to one alcoholic drink for women or two drinks for men, then switch to water. Alcohol is high in calories.

- Plan activities that don't focus on food.

Studies show that significant weight loss can greatly reduce or eliminate obesity-related illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease. If you are struggling to lose weight, Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center offers surgical and non-surgical weight-loss options that can also provide benefits to overall health. Our staff will help you decide the weight loss option that is right for you and your weight loss goals.

For more information, visit FSRegional.com/bariatrics.

Fort Sanders Center for Bariatric Surgery is accredited as a Comprehensive Center by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program and offers:

- Therapeutic diet education for chronic health conditions, including diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and heart disease
- Nutrition counseling for weight management
- Bariatric surgery, nutrition and insurance consultations
- Weekly meetings with a nurse practitioner
- Monthly support groups and health education classes
- Lab testing
- Optional B12 injections

To learn more about surgical and non-surgical options, or to view the 2020 Bariatric Seminar Dates visit FSRegional.com/bariatrics/ or call (865) 541-4500.

Coping with Grief and Loss During the Holidays

Is it more than the blues? When to seek professional help.

The added stress of the holidays can be daunting, especially for those who already are dealing with their own or another person's depression, anxiety, chemical dependency, other medical conditions or loss of a loved one. That's why a strong support system can be an important resource for recovery and empowerment. Support groups bring together people with similar problems to share emotional issues and provide moral support. Being aware of

the symptoms of depression or sadness, including triggers for these feelings, can help one anticipate and circumvent the pitfalls of the holiday blues.

If five or more of these symptoms persist for more than two weeks or interfere with work and family life, it may be time to seek help through a physician or mental health professional:

- Feeling sad or empty
- A sense of loss of enjoyment or fun

- Inexplicable weight gain or loss
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping excessively
- Feeling restless or slowed down
- A lack of energy
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Trouble concentrating
- Thinking a lot about death

If you suspect that you or a loved one is suffering from depression, call Peninsula at (865) 970-9800 or visit peninsulabehavioralhealth.org.

Tips to ease the blues

If you have the holiday blues, try these tips:

- Have a heart-to-heart talk with a friend.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Stick to your normal routine as much as you can.
- Set an achievable budget and then stick to it.

- Set realistic goals and expectations. Find time for yourself.
- Don't label the season as a time to cure past problems.
- Enjoy free holiday activities. Try new celebrations and events that are available in your area.

