

Wishing You a Healthy Holiday Season

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While the holidays are a time for celebration, many of my patients experience a lot of stress during the holiday season. They might lose traction with the healthy habits they've been working on or fall off the wagon altogether. While I want to encourage everyone to stick with their good habits even during the holidays, it's pretty normal for things to shift during the holidays or other busy or stressful times. Here are some of the ways I encourage my patients to have a healthier holiday season.

- The holidays often bring together events and people in ways that are not typical, and which can generate friction. As you may have guessed by the name of my clinic, Serenity Wellness, the Serenity Prayer has a lot of meaning for me. I find it a very useful mantra to hold onto during stressful times as a reminder to take action where you can, practice patience, radical acceptance and deep breathing for everything else. This includes having patience with yourself.
- Build some additional stress management skills and add them to your regular schedule. I find meditation and walking to be incredible stress relievers. Many of my patients also find a weekly acupuncture session during the holidays helps them manage the stress of the holidays. It's easy in the whirlwind of holiday events to let our coping mechanisms slide off our radar, but this is exactly when they are most valuable.
- I love the idea of a game or other physical activity being a part of the family holiday tradition. If this isn't already a part of your traditions, consider starting a new tradition that incorporates movement. Take a walk after the big meal, play

a game of charades, walk through a neighborhood to see decorations, have a dance party while putting away the food and cleaning dishes. Make moving your body in a fun way part of your holiday tradition.

- And I can't ignore the elephant in the room - what about the food?! First and foremost, enjoy your favorite traditional holiday foods. If they aren't the healthiest (I love pumpkin pie!), get the best of that thing and enjoy some without guilt. My patients have heard these exact words from me, I promise!
- My general dietary recommendations don't change based on the holidays either - Stay hydrated, eat vegetables, listen to your body. Drink plenty of water and make sure to have vegetables every day. Listen to your body for hunger or fullness signals and try to respect those. I also recommend you prepare some non-holiday foods in advance so that when you are hungry, you have something quick to grab. It's okay to eat light if you know you're sharing a feast later, but I don't recommend skipping meals altogether, so having something ready to go is helpful.

I hope these tips help you have a peaceful, healthy, and happy holiday season. I'll be sharing this article with a few additional resources on my website, [DoctorBijana.com/resources](https://www.doctorbijana.com/resources).



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