

## Don't be “too happy” this holiday season



The holiday season is full of festivities where we celebrate and connect with friends and family. Platters of food are plentiful as we bond over delicious food and drinks with our loved ones. However, previous holiday habits and gatherings must be put on pause to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Despite all of this, we can still try to enjoy the festivities, relax, and have fun. With the jolly atmosphere, it is easy to overindulge in the food and eat more than the body can handle.

The Philippine College of Physicians (PCP) Foundation reports links were found between the holiday season and an increase in the risk of heart attacks and stroke. Emotional stresses and the overindulgence of food and alcohol are thought to contribute to this phenomenon.<sup>1</sup>

Here are some tips to help maintain health during this holiday season<sup>2-5</sup>

**1. Set a limit for the food you plan to consume**

Because delicious food is abundant, it is definitely tempting to try each food option available. Set yourself the expectation that it is okay to not taste and eat everything that is available. Pick small portions of appetizing food. Try to avoid drinking large amounts of soda as too much refined sugar and high-fructose corn syrup can cause fatty buildup that can possibly lead to liver diseases.

**2. Don't drink too much alcohol**

In all of the celebrations, alcohol is usually present to facilitate conversations. Do not forget that drinking too much alcohol can cause chronic disturbances that may potentially lead to liver diseases, diabetes, obesity, and heart diseases. Remember, you can also have the same amount of fun without drinking much or any alcohol at all.

**3. Don't toss away your healthy habits**

Daily routines might get heavily affected by the holiday schedule. Your sleep schedule and mealtimes might turn irregular. It is found that short-term changes in diet can affect the liver's ability to contribute to fast digestion. Remember to take your usual medications and, if possible, store a bit more since pharmacies might be closed for the holidays.

**4. If you are feeling symptoms, don't wait for holidays to end to go to the doctor**

This might be another potential reason for the increase in heart attacks and strokes around the holidays. Patients have the tendency to postpone doctor's appointments until after celebrations have died down and unknowingly waste valuable time.

**5. Don't be afraid to say "No"**

The holiday season is filled with events, and it can be too much for some people. Don't be afraid to say no. True friends and family will understand. Set clear boundaries and try to stay within them.

**6. Have some personal time**

Set aside time to spend with yourself. Do things that you enjoy or rekindle old hobbies. Find something that brings you joy and allow yourself to relax and unwind

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