



The Month of December:

- Christmas -The celebration of Jesus' birth – December 25th
- Safe Toys & Gifts Month
- National Influenza Vaccination Week – Dec. 3th thru Dec. 9th
- National Handwashing Awareness Week - Dec. 3th thru Dec. 9th



In His Service, H-3 Ministry

For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Luke 2:11-14



The Real Meaning of Christmas

It's that time of year again. December has come and with it all the joys of Christmas. But what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, the cards in the mail, turkey dinners with family and friends, snow in the yard, stockings hanging in the living room, and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets? Is this really Christmas?

For many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don't have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmastime when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons. Turkey dinners may be only a wish and not a reality for some.

Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. You see, Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before. The star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this special child.

SEE Luke 2:4-19

Why did He come? Why did God send His son to this sometimes cruel and hard world? He sent Jesus to us so that one day, He would grow up to become a very important part of history. His story (history) is one of truth, love, and hope. It brought salvation to all of us. Without Jesus, we would all die in our sins.

Jesus was born so one day the price could be paid for the things we have done that are wrong. The Bible says that all have sinned. We are all born with a sin nature. We do things that do not please God. Through the sins of Adam and Eve, we have all inherited that sin nature. We need to have that removed. The only way is through Jesus. Jesus came so He could die on the cross for ALL of our sins. If we believe that Jesus died for our sins, we can ask Him to come into our hearts and forgive us. Then, we are clean and made whole. We can know that heaven is a place where we can go to when this life is over.

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

We can truly be happy at Christmas! No matter what may be happening, we can know that we are His children. We then become sons and daughters of God. Heaven will be our home one day.

Look at Christmas in a new way this year. This is the year to invite Jesus into your heart. You will then have a "Merry Christmas." The joy and peace you will receive will last all year as you look to God for all your needs to be met.

Jesus Is The Reason For The Season!
Rejoice!

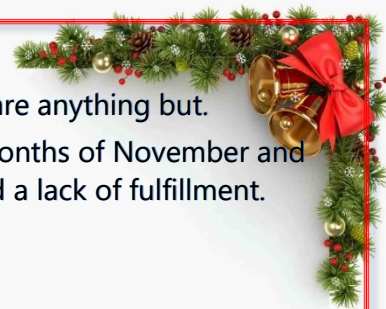


Our Best Wishes for a Blessed, Happy, Healthy, & Safe Christmas Season filled with Love, Hope, Joy & Peace!



H-3 Ministry

Holiday Depression



Holidays are supposed to be a time of joy and celebration, but for some people they are anything but. Depression may occur at any time of the year, but the stress and anxiety during the months of November and December may cause even those who are usually content to experience loneliness and a lack of fulfillment.

Why Is Depression So Common During the Holidays?

There are several reasons why you may develop depression during the holidays:

Social Isolation

Social isolation is one of the biggest predictors of depression, especially during the holidays.

Some people may have a small social circle or a lack of opportunities for socialization. People who have feelings of disconnectedness often avoid social interactions at holiday time. Unfortunately, withdrawing often makes the feelings of loneliness and symptoms of depression worse.

These individuals may see other people spending time with friends and family, and ask themselves, "Why can't that be me?" or "Why is everyone else so much happier than I am?"

One of the best ways to deal with social isolation is to reach out to friends or family for support. You can also try talking to a therapist. They can help you figure out where your feelings come from and develop solutions to overcome them.

Grieving During the Holidays

Some people may be keenly aware of the loss of a loved one during the holiday season. Here are several ways to stave off the holiday blues that may descend at this time:

Begin a New Tradition

Try planning a family outing or vacation, instead of spending the holidays at home.

Don't Give In to Holiday Pressures

Feel free to leave an event if you aren't comfortable. Be willing to tell others, "I'm not up for this right now."

Volunteer

Helping others can also be very helpful for you, too. For example, you might try:

- working at a soup kitchen
- organizing a gift drive
- helping your neighbor with a yard or house task

Get Back to Nature

Going for a walk in the park or the woods helps many people relax and feel better when they are feeling overwhelmed.

Major Depressive Disorder with Seasonal Pattern

Major depressive disorder with seasonal pattern is a type of recurrent depression that is caused by the seasons changing. Many people with this disorder develop depression symptoms during the fall, and continue to feel sad throughout the winter. Most people stop having symptoms during the spring and summer. However, some people experience seasonal depression during the spring and summer.

This disorder is treated with light therapy, antidepressants, and talk therapy.

Dealing with Holiday Depression

Talk to your doctors if you are feeling sad for long periods of time. They can refer you to a mental health specialist.

You can improve your mood by practicing self-care during the holidays. Eat a healthy diet, and maintain a regular sleep pattern and exercise program. According to the kept Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, as little as 30-minutes of cardiovascular exercise can provide an immediate mood boost similar to the effects of an antidepressant medication. Joining a support group where you talk to people with similar experiences to yours can also help.

Avoiding Holiday Weight Gain



1 Get moving.

Regular, sustained aerobic activity is one of the most effective ways to maintain or lose weight. But check with your doctor before you start.



2 Cheat a little, but only once a day.

If you must indulge in a holiday treat, allow yourself 1 small serving. Savor the texture and aroma. Then compensate later on by reducing your calorie intake or burning a few extra calories through exercise.



3 Control the risk for temptation.

Clear your office and home of tempting holiday goodies. When you bake, keep a small amount for your family. Then give the rest away. (And share any gifts of food.)



4 Eat your veggies and fruits.

Aim for 7 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. They'll satisfy your stomach without adding empty calories. And the fiber will help you feel full.



5 Never go to a party hungry.

Eat 1 serving of fruit, fat-free yogurt or raw nuts beforehand. Approach the party food only if you feel hungry. Then take your time, and choose mindfully.



6 Be in charge of your party choices.

Bring a heart-healthy appetizer or dessert so you'll have at least one nutritious option. Use a smaller plate to control portion sizes. Bypass the rich sauces, the high-fat meatballs, the wings. (And remember not to drink too many calories.)



7 Say no politely.

You're not obliged to eat high-calorie foods. Even when they're home-made and your host encourages you. Learn to say no politely.



8 Focus on socializing, not food.

Conversation is calorie-free, and standing burns more calories than sitting. So get out and mingle — and offer to help clean up.

Handwashing - why it's important

A number of infectious diseases can be spread from one person to another by contaminated hands. These diseases include gastrointestinal infections, such as Salmonella, and respiratory infections, such as influenza. Washing your hands properly can help prevent the spread of the germs (like bacteria and viruses) that cause these diseases.

Some forms of gastrointestinal and respiratory infections can cause serious complications, especially for young children, the elderly, or those with a weakened immune system.

When to wash your hands

You should wash your hands thoroughly:

- after using the toilet or changing diapers
- before, during and after preparing food
- between handling raw and cooked or ready-to-eat food
- before eating
- after using a tissue or handkerchief
- before and after attending to sick children or other family members.
- after smoking
- after handling rubbish or working in the garden
- after handling animals

It's Flu Season!

Who should get vaccinated?

Flu vaccination has important benefits.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every year before flu activity begins in their community.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.

resources this issue

Resources: <https://www1.cbn.com/devotions/real-meaning-christmas>
http://www.fisher-price.com/en_US/parenting-articles/health-and-safety/10-toy-safety-tips
<https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/holidays#3>
<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2014/12/8-tips-for-healthy-holiday-eating-infographic/>
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/handwashing-why-its-important>
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/vaccinations.htm>

10 Toy Safety Tips

Make sure the fun and games are baby-friendly



- 1) Always pay close attention to the age recommendations on toys and choose one according to a child's age, interest and skill level. Also, be aware of other safety labels such as "Flame retardant/flame resistant" or "Washable/Hygienic materials" on dolls and other stuffed toys, and learn how to clean baby toys of all types.
- 2) Discard the plastic wrappings from toys immediately; they become deadly playthings to small children.
- 3) For children one and under, choose toys that are colorful, lightweight, have various textures and are made of non-toxic materials. Children this age learn through sight, touch, sound and taste and often put things into their mouths to explore them.
- 4) Don't give young children any toys with small parts such as removable eyes, noses, etc., they are choking hazards.
- 5) Inspect all toys for sharp points or edges made from such materials as metal or glass—these toys should not be given to children under eight years of age. This includes stuffed animals with wires that could stab, cut or shock if exposed.
- 6) Toys with strings, cords or ribbons of any kind should not be hung in cribs or playpens. Young children can become entangled which can cause injury or death.
- 7) Teach older children to keep their toys that may have removable small parts, sharp points or toys ran on electricity out of reach of younger siblings. Young children are very curious and may investigate toys that aren't appropriate for them.
- 8) Keep toys and play equipment in good condition and discard any toys that are broken to prevent injuries.
- 9) Supervision is essential; provide safe hazard-free play environments both indoors and during outdoor play. Toys get used and abused by children; regularly conduct a toy maintenance check for safety and durability.
- 10) Teach children early to put toys away when they are finished playing with them. This will prevent accidental falls over them.

