10 Health Tips to Light Up Your Holidays

Brighten the holidays by making your health and safety a priority. The following recommended tips will keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy—and ready to enjoy the holidays.

Wash hands often to prevent the possibility of spreading germs and getting sick.

Bundle up to stay dry and warm. Layer your clothing and include mittens, hats, scarves and water-proof boots.

Manage stress. Give yourself small breaks if you feel stressed out.

Don’t drink and drive. Having a designated driver will keep you and others on the road out of danger.

Be smoke free. Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.

Fasten seat belts. Always “buckle-up” and make sure your child has the appropriate car seat for his or her height and weight.

Get health exams, screenings and vaccinations to help prevent seasonal illnesses.

Monitor your children. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items and other objects out of children’s reach.

Practice fire safety. Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Don’t leave space heaters, stoves or candles unattended.

Eat healthy, stay active. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, which pack plenty of nutrients and help lower the risk for certain diseases. Limit portion sizes. Be active at least 2 1/2 hours each week.

Energy Snack

1 cup corn puffs
1 cup wheat squares
1 cup frosted bite-size rice or wheat squares
1 cup raisins

Place all ingredients in a large bowl and mix.

This can be packaged in small decorative bags or containers as a holiday gift.

Makes 8 one-half cup servings.

Calories 110
Sodium 65mg
Total carbs 26g
Dietary fiber 2g
Sugars 16g
Protein 2g
Contains no fat or cholesterol.

Source: www.cdc.gov

Source: Eat Smart Be Active Cookbook
Keep Your Pet Safe

Our pets are part of the family and want to enjoy the holidays with us. However, this can be an especially dangerous time of year for them. Follow a few simple tips to keep them safe.

- Holiday plants can be harmful to your pet and should be kept out of reach. These include: lilies, mistletoe, holly and amaryllis.
- Foods that can cause illness include: chocolate, raisins, grapes, onions and coffee.
- Other things to be aware of: liquid potpourri can cause damage to skin and can be fatal if swallowed; pine needles can be toxic to pets; water from the tree stand can have harmful bacteria and if it contains a preservative it can prove fatal.

Source: americanhumane.org

Create a Coal Garden

Ingredients:
- 3-4 Coal lumps
- Food Coloring
- 2 Tbsp Water
- 2 Tbsp Liquid Bluing
- 2 Tbsp Ammonia
- 2 Tbsp Salt
- 1 Plastic or aluminum plate/pan

Directions:
1. Place 3-4 lumps of coal onto a plastic or aluminum plate or pie pan. Position the plate/pan in a location where it will not be disturbed or bumped.
2. Slowly pour two tablespoons of water over the coal, to wet the entire surface.
3. Slowly pour two tablespoons of bluing over the coal, to wet the entire surface.
4. Slowly pour two tablespoons of ammonia over the coal, to wet the entire surface. Try not to directly breathe in the ammonia fumes.
5. Then drip a variety of food colorings over the top of the coal lumps.
6. Gently sprinkle two tablespoons of salt over the coal.
7. Put the coal garden in place with no disturbances. Growth will begin within a few hours and continue until the next day.
8. Apply the ingredients in this order to achieve a quick reaction. Ingredients (except food coloring) can be mixed and then poured.

Source: americanhumane.org

Make 2015 a Year of Healthy Living

Don’t make the same old New Year’s resolutions this year. Think of 2015 as a year-long commitment to a healthier lifestyle. Instead of trying to make BIG changes quickly, focus on taking small steps. Try changes in eating, physical activity and emotional support.

Here are 15 ideas to get you started to healthy living in 2015:
- Eat healthy one meal or snack at a time.
- Read food labels.
- Control portions.
- Make appointments for routine check-ups.
- Floss your teeth.
- Disinfect surfaces in your home.
- Wash your hands.
- Plan a vacation or weekend getaway.
- Stay in touch with friends and family.
- Learn ways to relieve stress.
- Use sunscreen all year long.
- Be more active every day.
- Buckle up when driving or riding in a car.
- Fight the urge to smoke or use tobacco one step at a time.
- Write down things that you are thankful for in your life.

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