



## Rediscover the “happy” in “happy holidays”

For some people, an annual holiday tradition is the sense of sadness that comes with this time of year — a condition known as the “holiday blues.” The holidays can be filled with extra stress, unrealistic expectations and sentimental memories, but recognizing your feelings and taking proper care of yourself can go a long way toward feeling better.

### Contributing Factors to the Holiday Blues

- Less sunlight during the fall and winter
- Seasonal changes in diet or routines
- Increase in the number of events where alcohol is likely to be present
- Holiday-related stress

### Symptoms of the Holiday Blues

- Fatigue
- Frustration
- Loneliness and isolation
- Loss
- Sadness
- Tension

Holiday blues are different from mental illness, but short-term mental health problems must be taken seriously. They can lead to clinical anxiety and depression. People already living with mental illness may be affected by the holiday blues.

### Avoiding the Holiday Blues

- Get enough sleep.
- Take time for yourself, but don’t isolate yourself. Spend time with people who are caring and supportive.
- Eat and drink in moderation. Alcohol is a depressant, so it can exacerbate existing feelings of sadness.
- Get some exercise, even just a walk around the block.
- Listen to music you find calming and soothing.
- Make a to-do list to help yourself organize your plans and priorities. However, it’s important to be realistic, so keep it manageable.
- Set reasonable expectations and goals for holiday activities, such as shopping, sending cards, cooking and entertaining.
- Set a budget for holiday activities.

Remember, the holidays will pass, and in many cases, so will your feelings of sadness. But if you’re feeling depressed or anxious for more than two or three weeks, you may have a more serious mental health problem. Speak with your doctor to get the care you need.



Sources: American Diabetes Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NJWELL is an incentive-based wellness program offered to active employees and their covered spouses who participate in the SHBP/SEHBP. More detail can be found on <http://www.nj.gov/njwell/>.

**Please Note:** Preventive care services and screenings are only covered when rendered by an in-network doctor or other health care professional.

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