



# Lifting your spirits during the holidays

Holiday season can be depressing for some people. The more pressure you feel to be cheery, the sadder you may become. Here are some tips to help with these emotions:

- Skip parties you don't really want to attend. Don't force yourself to "make merry." On the other hand, don't isolate yourself completely. That can make you feel worse. Choose one or two events to attend where you'll feel most comfortable.
- Take a break from holiday stress. Feeling pressure about decorating and shopping? Resist the urge to make things perfect. Instead, be kind to yourself. Take time to relax or meet a friend for coffee. Skip the holiday TV shows if they make you feel blue.
- Volunteer. Many food banks and other services for the needy look for volunteers during the holidays. Be a volunteer. It can help you forget about your own problems for a while. It can also make you feel good about doing things for others.
- Don't overspend. If you get into debt over the holidays, you'll be bluer when the bills come in. If you want to give gifts, get creative. Make "gift cards" for things like a trip with you to a museum, your help with household repairs or an afternoon at the movies. Remember, it's the thought — not the price — that counts.
- Start new traditions. If old family customs make you sad, create some new ones. Include the people who matter in your life right now. Try new activities that feel fun and meaningful. They may become your new traditions.
- Watch your sugar and alcohol intake. Holidays bring lots of fun treats and desserts. But overdoing it can affect your mood and energy. Try to control your eating and drinking.

- Stay active. Depression can weigh you down. Fight back by taking short walks or doing anything active. Exercise can lift your mood and help you manage stress.

## Finding help

If you find yourself struggling with significant depression, seek professional help. Research indicates a high level of success with appropriate help.

- SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 or 1-800-273-8225
- Your company's Employee Assistance Program or behavioral health benefits
- 911 for emergency services

This material provides a general overview of the topic. Health information is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a therapist, physician or other health care professional. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs.