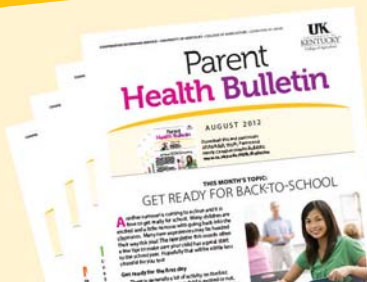


# Parent Health Bulletin



DECEMBER 2012

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# KEEPING STRESS OUT OF THE HOLIDAYS

**D**id you know that 91 percent of children are aware of parent stress? Although there are a lot of fun things to do this time of year, it can also be very stressful. Along with the holidays comes stress related to spending, entertaining, travel and changes in routine. Follow some of these tips to help reduce the stress that your family may feel:

- **Make it fun.** Keep harps, jingle bells or other small instruments handy. It can be enjoyable for all if you pull these out and sing a song or just wear a holiday hat in the evening. Encourage your child to sing a song or tell a silly holiday story. Try recording it on video so that you can share it with others. You can also tell funny stories if you find yourself waiting in line somewhere.
- **Keep it small.** If you usually have a large party, know that your child may get overloaded. When there is a lot of activity going on, children may not feel like they have a moment alone.



**Children can help you cook and bake.**

Continued on the back →



# Making sure your child is not hungry and is rested helps prevent holiday meltdowns.

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Make sure to find a place your child can go if he or she needs a little quiet time.

- **Keep them busy.** Sometimes children want to be useful. This is a great time of the year to ask them to help out. Children can help you cook and bake, as well as set the table and help put things away after a meal. It may not be perfect, but when your child helps out, make sure to tell him or her how thankful you are for their help.
- **Keep your child on schedule.** It may be hard, but schedules are important for children, especially when it comes to eating and sleeping. If you know that your child will be hungry while you are out, pack a healthy snack. Also, try to get children into bed as close to their normal bed time as possible. Making sure your child is not hungry and is rested helps prevent holiday meltdowns.
- **Set expectations.** If you know that you will be busy this holiday, talk to your child about what is expected. If your child does not know that you will be waiting in a line or that a lot of family is coming over, they may not know how to react when it happens. Making sure your child is prepared helps to ensure he or she behaves as you would like.

Here are 3 ways you can keep your stress level down:

- **Create a budget and stick to it.** The holidays can be stressful if you do not know how much you have to spend.

*Take a few deep breaths. Taking deep breaths relaxes your body. This can help if you are waiting in a line longer than you were expecting.*



**Create a budget and stick to it.**

- **Shop early for some food items.** If you know that you will need certain canned goods or pantry items for a holiday dinner, go ahead and buy them now. You will not have to go out into the crowded stores as it gets closer to the holidays.
- **Take a deep breath.** Take a few moments and take some deep breaths. Taking a deep breath relaxes your body. This can help if you are waiting in a line longer than you were expecting.

**To you and your family — Happy Holidays!**

**SOURCE:**

Stress Free Kids <http://www.stressfreekids.com/5366/christmas-stress-free-holidays> Dec 2011

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