



## **The Holidays are Here!**

The holiday season is upon us, and for a lot of us, that means some combination of stress and joy. We get the most wonderful aspects of the holidays, family, friends, food, and celebration! On the other hand, we must contend with travel and health concerns that may arise as well. This time of year, can be a double-edged sword, but we have some information that could help you out! Let's see what kind of details our esteemed doctor, John Georgio, can share with us!

The holidays are definitely quite travel-heavy for some of us. The friends and family we visit might live far away, or we might want to take a location in a new, faraway place. Regardless of the reason, there's tons of people with the exact same mentality, leaving airports and highways packed and jammed. Certainly, one of the primary worries around travel in the past few years has been the possibility of contracting COVID-19. Of course, beyond that, there's also the threat of influenza during the fall and winter seasons.

## **The best thing you can do**

If you absolutely must go to the airport or any other crowded public places, try to avoid large crowds of folks and maintain a safe distance from anyone that you may interact with. Practicing social distancing is still as important as it's ever been in the past few years with the ongoing pandemic. Continue to sanitize and wear your mask. Even if there was no situation with COVID, sanitization and social distancing are always good pieces of advice to avoid catching any sort of sickness.

## **Coping and managing your health during the season**

We all know that the holiday season is filled with tons of festive culinary goodies, how do we cope? A lot of us love to eat, drink, and be merry, but for some, this can cause health issues. Besides some mostly harmless, temporary ailments like a stomachache, overeating can come with some more severe consequences. Incidents of cardiac events are actually highest between November to mid-January. In our current cultural climate, people are avoidant of going in for doctor's visits, whether it relates to ignorance, monetary concerns, or something else. Many people are pre-diabetic without their knowledge, and the volume and types of food consumed during the holiday season can be the tipping point that moves them to diabetic status.

Some good advice regarding eating during the holiday season would be to keep a firm eye on your diet and exercise leading into the season. Keep your usual routine in mind, and, if you know there's any holiday festivities coming on, be sure to tighten up your discipline! For example, if an office party is coming up and you know you'll want to indulge in some delicious holiday cookies, you might consider consuming less

calories during the rest of the week to compensate. Many people follow the concept of having “cheat days”, meaning they choose one day every once in a while, to allow themselves to eat a bit more freely (not neglecting any health-imposed limits, of course). If you happen to have an extra slice of pie during one or two days out of the entire year, it’s not something to beat yourself up mentally over!

Of course, that alludes to the fact that many people associate eating with feelings of guilt or sadness. Some folks could feel awful about their additional slice, which can push them mentally to forego their entire diet and exercise routine entirely. On the contrary, some people can get so excited about the opportunity to eat a variety of holiday treats that they might just throw out their health and fitness plans on the spot. It’s very important to note that having one or two bad days out of the year, as we talked about before, is not the end of your quest for health! The holidays aren’t the entire year, so staying firm for the rest of the year will prepare you well. Continue to follow your plans and routines in the coming days and weeks after your beloved holidays end, rather than pushing it off as a “New Year’s resolution” or something similar.

### **Be aware of the mindset of those around you**

If you feel like you might need some support on this, the company you keep during this wonderful time of the year is quite important! If you’re around people that generally like to overindulge in food without a second thought, it’s possible they could directly (or indirectly) encourage you to do the same. On the contrary, sharing a space with friends and family that understand where you are mentally and know your goals and struggles will be invaluable to keeping you on track. “Falling off the horse,” as the saying goes, is not the end of the world for your health goals. Be sure to surround yourself with supportive people, have a firm grasp on your own health needs, and hop right back on! Keep an eye out for pesky illnesses, such as influenza, COVID, and RSV as well throughout your holiday season to keep yourself (and others!) happy and healthy! Most of all, have a fantastic time with those you care about most; they are a crucial part of your health, especially around this time!