



Beat the Holiday "Blues"

active aging



isolated, and forgotten. The following tips may help you, family members, or friends enjoy the season and cope with the holiday blues.

Get involved—Volunteering is a great way to help others and yourself. Contact someone at your local school, hospital, food pantry, church, synagogue, or mosque. There may be several opportunities in your community.

Be social—Attend the parties and events to which you are invited! If you need travel assistance, ask for help from family members or friends. Invite guests over to visit you. Explore seasonal exhibits at a museum or attend a holiday musical performance.

Take care of yourself—Holidays can alter our usual routines and affect our health. Try to eat a healthy diet—limit the amount of cookies, pies, and candy you consume. Get enough sleep, limit alcohol (which can interfere with medications and lowers mood), and be physically active.

Have realistic expectations—Holidays can put pressure on us. Try to avoid having unrealistic expectations that are often portrayed by the media.

Don't overspend—Set a budget for holiday spending and stick to it. Consider alternative ideas for gift giving, such as inviting a friend over for lunch or taking a grandchild to the park.

Create a new tradition—Take a walk with a friend

It's the time of year when our thoughts turn to family gatherings, festivities, and celebrations of the holiday season. Although it's an enjoyable time for many people, despite the flurry of holiday activities, it's also possible to feel lonely,

and enjoy the festive decorations. Have lunch at a special restaurant, rent a favorite holiday video, or cook a favorite dish from your childhood.

Seek professional help, if necessary—There is nothing wrong with not feeling happy and cheerful during the holidays. Accept how you are feeling, but be sure to talk to someone you trust about your feelings.

If your holiday blues linger, you could be experiencing mild depression. Depression is often dismissed as a normal part of aging and often goes undiagnosed. Fortunately, depression is treatable. If you are experiencing any of the following warning signs of depression, seek professional help from your healthcare provider:

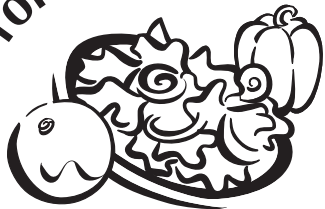
- Persistent feeling of sadness that won't go away
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that you once enjoyed
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Loss of appetite or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide

You don't have to feel alone during the holidays. Make plans to enjoy the simple pleasures of this special time of year!

*Source: "Out of the Blue: Understanding and Responding to Depression," John Rapking, Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. "Free Yourself from Harmful Stress," Trevor Powell, DK Publishing. "Tips for Beating the Holiday Blues," The AGS Foundation for Health in Aging, www.healthinaging.org. "Depression," Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
Contributed by Jennifer Even, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Ohio State University Extension, Hamilton County.*

How Do You Spend Your Calories?

food for thought



MyPyramid.gov is the government's tool to help us all eat better. Think of MyPyramid.gov as a budgeting tool—much as you plan to spend your money, plan to “spend” your calories. Start by learning “how much” and “what” to eat by checking the MyPyramid.gov web site. The site lets you personalize the amount and types of foods you need

each day to maintain your current weight. Then it's your job is to try to stay within your calorie budget. Just 100 extra calories a day add up to 10 pounds of weight gain per year! One hundred extra calories could come from just 10 jelly beans or 2/3 can of regular soda.

To stick to your calorie budget, choose foods that are nutrient-rich such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products. Most people should have two cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables each day. For best health, choose a rainbow of colors when choosing fruits and vegetables.

Read labels when choosing whole grains and look for whole wheat, brown and wild rice, buckwheat, and whole rye listed on the ingredient statement. When choosing low fat dairy products, look for low fat and fat-free products in order to reduce calories but still maintain nutrient needs.

Protein choices should be a daily amount of 5½ servings of lean meats or beans. Bake, broil, or grill the meat choices for best calorie control. Oils should be limited to 3–7 teaspoons a day. Best choices are canola, corn, cottonseed, olive, safflower, soybean, and sunflower oils.

Once you have satisfied your basic nutrient needs, then you can consider spending any “extra” calories. These can be spent on food items that may be higher in fat and added sugar. Choose these foods cautiously—one teaspoon of added fat is about 35 calories and 1 teaspoon of added sugar is about 20 calories. Many people do not have many calories left at the end of the day to spend, but you can increase the amount of extra calories available by increasing your level of physical activity.

When you budget your money wisely to cover your basic needs, you have something left to spend on extras. If you choose foods to cover your basic needs wisely, then you have more “extra” calories to spend as well.

By Linnette Mizer Goard, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Lorain County.

Sources: Benes, B., and Henneman, A. (2005) Spending Your Calorie Salary. Power point: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/mypyramid-calories-salary.htm>.

United States Department of Agriculture web site: <http://www.mypyramid.gov>, downloaded June 1, 2007.

United States Department of Agriculture (2005) Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, Home and Garden Bulletin No. 232. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

reader's corner



Today I Am a Ma'am And Other Musings on Life, Beauty, and Growing Older

By Valerie Harper
With Catherine Whitney

Today I Am a Ma'am will make you laugh as you recall the realities of aging. Valerie Harper, author, actress, and dancer is very blunt about prevailing media wisdom. Greeting cards insult, television practices ageism, and movies produce sexy older men like Sean Connery or Michael Douglas with leading ladies who are in their twenties.

Harper provides readers encouragement, laughter, and a positive image of growing older. While poking fun at bizarre standards by which women are judged, we absorb wisdom. Harper asks some perplexing questions, with tongue in cheek:

- If you wear a size zero, do you exist?
- Would menopause be revered if it happened to men?
- Are dressing rooms fitted with fun house mirrors?

After laughing your way through the book, including hysterical illustrations by Rick Tulka, you will find Valerie's Golden Rules. Do you wonder what they are? Enjoy the book!

Reviewed by Linda Vogel, Area Agency on Aging 10B, Inc.; Uniontown, Ohio

Meet Sandy



I am not sure I can recall the first time I met Sandy, but I'm sure glad I did.

She is a young senior, a caregiver for her mother-in-law, a devoted grandmother, mother, and wife. But to me, she's the bundle of energy who makes me smile just by reading her name! She can create quite a raucous with her jokes and turn around and touch your heart with a story. She has more than a full plate, but if someone in her family or com-

munity needs her help—she is there.

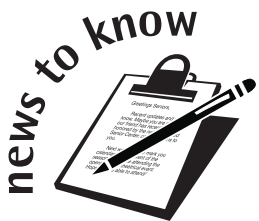
She has honored us by attending many of the caregiver retreats our organization has coordinated. In fact, on the few occasions where she could not attend, I was disappointed and had to call her for a "Sandy-fix"! She is quick to share a chuckle with the other caregivers and sometimes finds herself in a bit of trouble when she is caught talking when the next part of the agenda is being discussed! While many caregivers enjoy the quiet sessions promoting relaxation, Sandy, along with many

other caregivers, prefers the more lively and interactive sessions. She especially likes the sessions where she gets to "create" something—no matter how it might look when she is done.

She has a wonderful smile, and without question it is her sense of humor that keeps her going. She regularly shares how humor is an important part of her caregiving, keeping all of those as positive as possible no matter how stressful the situation gets.

By Karen Puterbaugh, Executive Director, Greene County Council on Aging

Be Prepared—Stay Safe



What does it mean to be prepared in the event of a natural disaster? According to the Department of Homeland Security, it means, at a minimum, having an emergency supply kit on hand and a plan

for what you will do in an emergency.

A partial list of recommended supplies includes:

- Water—1 gallon per person per day for 3 days
- Food—3 days supply non-perishable items and a manual can opener
- Battery powered or hand crank radio and weather radio
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties

Make a plan for what you would do in an emergency. Be sure to put your plan in writing and share it with the people in your personal support network—family, friends, and neighbors. You should include in your plan a list of emergency contacts, and how you will contact your loved ones if an emergency affects your life.

Being prepared not only makes your life easier in the event of an emergency, it can even save your life. Further information on what to include in your emergency supply kit and in your plan can be found at www.ready.gov, from your local Emergency Management Agency, or the American Red Cross.

*Prepared by Lynn Dobb, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging
Source: www.ready.gov*

Stressed is Just Desserts Spelled Backwards



Caregivers ... stressed ... overtired ... overworked ... meltdowns. Can you relate? If so, you're not alone. And as the holidays approach, it's easy to feel even more overwhelmed. Most people would like the holidays to be a time to enjoy with family and friends. For caregivers already balancing

caregiving responsibilities with everyday life, the addition of shopping, decorating, baking, cleaning, and socializing may be more than they can reasonably take on. How can you survive the holidays and turn 'stressed into desserts'?

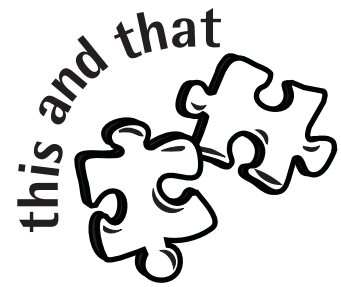
Take the Holiday Pledge:

I (your name here) do solemnly swear, from this day forward, to examine my holiday expectations and resolve not to cram any more into my already busy day. I promise not to turn into a crazed person as I try to create a Hallmark Special version of the holidays. I believe in the importance of keeping my sense of humor to avoid a meltdown and promise to use the word NO when asked to make cookies for the cookie exchange. Most importantly, I swear to care for myself and find daily quiet time even if it means sitting alone in the bathroom for ten minutes. Most of all, I will keep my sense of humor and not sweat the small stuff because most of it is small stuff; stressed will be my desserts.

Caregivers don't need more to do during the holidays, but if they don't speak up, others won't realize how overwhelming holidays can be. It is okay to say you just can't take on any more and then stick by your decision. Ask for help. Others may not know you need anything unless you speak up. Plan ahead for decorating and baking by assigning tasks to others. Prepare yourself. Family members who haven't been frequent visitors may not realize what goes into an average day and may downplay your caregiver role.

Ask yourself, "What am I celebrating?" Holiday expectations tend to be too high—strengthening family bonds, lifting spirits, confirming beliefs, and creating a feeling of good will. These expectations can add up to STRESSED. Decide which expectations are most deserving of your efforts and then you'll be able to plan celebrations that turn into DESSERTS.

Submitted by Nancy Recker, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Allen County



Tune-up Your Driving!

AARP has a great on-line Driver Safety course that is self-paced and interactive. Best of all, it can be taken at a time and place of your choice! Designed for drivers age 50 and older, it has helped millions remain safe on today's roads. The course will help you:

- Learn about normal age-related physical changes and how to adjust your driving to allow for these changes.
- Tune up your driving skills and update your knowledge of the rules of the road.
- Reduce your traffic violations, crashes, and chances for injuries.

There is a cost for taking the course (\$15.95 for AARP members and \$19.95 for non-members) but it might just be the best gift you give yourself or a loved one this holiday season!

Find out more by visiting the AARP web site, www.aarp.org, and search for "driver safety course."

Submitted by Kirk Blair, OSU Extension

SeniorHOTLINE

Volume 13, Issue 4

Senior
Series

A partnership between
Ohio State University Extension and
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Address editorial comments to:
Kirk Blair
Ohio State University Extension
Family and Consumer Sciences
185 Arps Hall, 1945 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43210

Issue Editors:

Kirk Blair, Ohio State University Extension
Deanna Clifford, District XI Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
Karen Puterbaugh, Greene County Council on Aging

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Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension

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