A Happy and Healthy Winter

As the temperatures drop this winter, we've curated a collection of tips to protect your mental and physical health. From festive gatherings to healthcare appointments, discover ways to make this season your happiest and healthiest yet!

Seek out social connections.

Darker, colder weather can cause some people to feel withdrawn or isolated. Protect against seasonal impacts on your mood by forming a comforting community.

- **Introduce yourself to a new social group.** Join virtual or in-person opportunities, like book clubs, community classes, or watch-parties, to bond with people who share similar interests.
- **Attend a local volunteer event.** Lending your time and support to a meaningful cause can foster new relationships with members of your community.
- **Explore a new hobby.** It's easy to get stuck in an old routine. Try a new hobby to spark joy and learning.

Embrace physical activity.

Exercise provides many benefits, such as improved circulation, bone and muscle strength, mental clarity, and sleep.

- **Experiment with a fitness routine.** Selecting the right activities helps you have fun while respecting your body's abilities and need for movement. Fitness doesn't only happen in the gym. Think outside the box with options like hiking, dancing, or chair exercises.
- **Stimulate the mind and body.** Alongside high-impact fitness options, walking, meditation, yoga, stretching, and balancing exercises can enhance mind-body awareness.
- **Use an activity tracker.** If you're struggling with how to become active, start with small weekly goals. Not every activity or workout needs to be well-planned to be impactful, but keeping a record of your efforts supports healthy habits and accountability.

Visit your primary healthcare providers.

Every year, you should ensure your physical, visual, dental, and mental health are monitored for illness prevention, detection, and treatment.

- **Get up-to-date on your vaccines.** Talk with a healthcare provider about which flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines you are eligible to receive. Vaccination is your best defense against severe illness, especially while traveling and gathering with loved ones.
- **Schedule your routine exams.** Annual physicals, vision, and dental appointments provide a great picture of total health, and support the early prevention and detection of illnesses.
- **Explore health insurance options.** Whether insured or uninsured, check with private or government insurance representatives to discuss insurance policies, benefits, and out-of-pocket costs.

Travel with a "safety first" mindset.

Prioritize your safety by building a travel plan that considers health precautions and emergency preparedness from the start.

- **Monitor and test your health status.** Before, during, and after your trip, pay close attention to changes to how your body feels. Consider testing for illnesses like COVID-19 before you travel, and stay home and seek treatment if you feel sick.
- **Sanitize your hands and consider wearing a mask.** Stop the spread of germs by washing or sanitizing your hands frequently, and wearing a mask when visiting immunocompromised people or when in crowded, indoor spaces.
- **Be ready for the unexpected.** Whether in a plane, train, or automobile, always wear your seatbelt and stay attentive to the weather and traffic forecasts.

For additional resources, see the CDC recommendations for staying safe and healthy during the winter.