

New survey: 79% of respondents overlook their health needs during the holidays

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According to new survey from the American Heart Association, the holidays are more stressful than taxes, causing people to overlook their own health during "the most wonderful time of the year." The survey

suggests that adults of all ages have trouble prioritizing their mental and physical health at this time of year.

Of the 1,000 U.S. adults nationwide surveyed in December 2023 by Wakefield Research for the American Heart Association's Healthy for Good initiative, more than half (63%) claimed that the [holiday season](#) is more stressful to them than tax season. Balancing work, family, finances and everyday obligations, while trying to fit in festive events that make this time of year special becomes overwhelming and induces chronic [stress](#) for many.

Many survey respondents (71%) said that their biggest regret each holiday season is that they did not take time to relax and enjoy themselves. Most survey respondents say it takes them weeks to feel less stressed after the holidays; with moms reporting it takes them a month or more to recover.

The demands of the holiday season can often feel overwhelming; however, by practicing simple [healthy habits](#), the stress from the holiday hustle and bustle can be easier to navigate and more relaxing.

"Chronic stress can negatively impact both your long-term mental and [physical health](#) in many ways if left unmanaged," said Glenn N. Levine, M.D., FAHA, American Heart Association volunteer, writing committee chair of the Association's 2021 [Psychological Health, Well-Being, and the Mind-Heart-Body Connection](#) scientific statement. "The holidays are an easy time to justify putting off healthy habits, but it's important to manage [chronic stress](#) and other risk factors to stay healthy during the holiday season and into the New Year."

Keeping healthy habits during the holidays can be difficult, but these small additions from the American Heart Association, a global force for longer, healthier lives for all, can help manage holiday stress.

- **Eat smart:** Eat reasonable portions and think about what colorful fruits and vegetables you can add to your plate versus foods to avoid.
- **Move more:** Physical activity is one of the best ways to manage stress, so aim to take a short walk each day. Any amount of movement counts.
- **Sleep well:** Quality sleep can influence your mood, eating habits, memory and more. Experiment with setting an alarm reminding you to silence your phone notifications and wind down.

Connecting with others is one of the most important aspects of the [holiday season](#). Whenever you or a loved one begins to feel stressed, make sure to express your feelings and lean upon each other for support, so you can enjoy the holidays together with lighter, healthier hearts.

More information: The American Heart Association's Healthy for Good initiative offers tips for managing stress, creating heart-healthy habits and more at heart.org/stress.

Provided by American Heart Association

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