

# Safety FOCUSED

December 2014

## Handling Festive Season Stress

Learn how to stay calm and enjoy the season.

## Avoid Itchy, Dry Winter Skin

Keep dry skin at bay with these suggestions.

A monthly safety newsletter from  
**Crendon Insurance Brokers Limited**

## Handling Festive Season Stress

The festive season can be one of the best times of the year, but it can also be the most stressful. Shopping for gifts, Christmas parties and time with family can take a toll on your mental and emotional health and leave you with little time to relax and enjoy the festivities.

Follow these tips to help you avoid stress during the festive season:

- Plan ahead – Waiting until the last minute to purchase gifts, plan a party or send out Christmas cards is bound to make you feel stressed. Give yourself plenty of time to complete your to-do list in case the crowds are large and the lines are long.
- Watch your finances – It can be tempting to overspend on the perfect gift for someone. But if that means your finances will suffer, it is not worth it. Set spending limits for yourself and stick to them.
- Adjust your expectations – You will not be able to make it to every party or purchase the perfect gift for everyone. Holding yourself to impossibly high standards is the best way to generate stress. Remind yourself to manage expectations and let go of any guilt.

An important part of the season is allowing yourself time to relax and really enjoy it. Here are some easy ways to take a breather and help you keep everything in perspective.

- Exercise – Keeping up your regular exercise routine during the festive season will help you relieve stress in a healthy way.
- Eat well – Overindulgence is often expected this time of year, whether it is too many sweets or too much alcohol. Maintain a good balance of fruits and vegetables and drink plenty of water.
- Avoid sugar and caffeine – Both may give you energy, but that energy will be short-lived and may make you more irritable or tired.
- Get plenty of sleep – Sleep is often the first thing people sacrifice during busy times. Allow yourself plenty of time to sleep every night.

The festive season should be full of happiness and gratitude, not worrying and stress. Staying positive during a potentially stressful time will help you carry the warmth of the festive season into the new year.

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## Avoid Itchy, Dry Winter Skin

Experts place a lot of emphasis on skin care during the summer—they recommend applying sunscreen every day, staying out of the sun when possible and moisturising your skin after sun exposure. But your skin needs just as much—if not more—care during the winter.

Winter's low humidity and cold air provide little respite if you are prone to developing dry skin. Dry skin can be uncomfortable, and it often becomes itchy and red if it goes untreated. The following are suggestions to avoid and treat dry winter skin:

- Take short baths or showers lasting no longer than 10 minutes.
- Bathe or shower in warm rather than hot water. Excessively hot water can exacerbate dryness and other problems by depleting the skin of its natural oils.
- Use mild, unscented soap with a hydrating formula. Some soaps can actually leave your skin feeling drier after you use them.

- Apply moisturiser to your skin a few minutes after a bath or shower, when your skin is still moist. This helps your skin retain lasting moisture.
- Apply moisturisers liberally throughout the day and before going to bed, especially in areas that are prone to dryness, such as your hands and face.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. A hydrated body translates to hydrated, refreshed skin.

You can increase the humidity level in your home to help soothe or prevent dry skin. Consider using a humidifier, a device that increases the moisture in the air. Increasing the amount of water molecules in the air around you can help ease the dryness of your skin.

If dry skin is an increasing problem for you, consider visiting a dermatologist to help you manage it. A dermatologist can prescribe moisture-rich creams or salves that are not available over the counter.



Safety in  
**NUMBERS** 123

**One in three** UK adults say they expected to start **2014 in debt** because of Christmas spending.



Source: The Money Advice Service

## The Dangers of Christmas Stress

Paul, a homeowner in Bristol, was busy getting ready to host a Christmas Eve breakfast for his family and friends. The night before Christmas Eve, Paul put up festive decorations on the inside of his home. Despite being exhausted from his hours of food preparation, he decided to also decorate the exterior of his home.

Paul strung Christmas lights around his windows and a few shrubs. He plugged the lights in and went to bed. Early the next morning, Paul was woken by fire service sirens and realised they were outside of his house. He saw flames and smoke coming from the front of his house and quickly ran outside.

The fire service was able to extinguish the fire, but Paul's home suffered extensive damage. A firefighter determined that the fire was started by the Christmas lights, which were old and weathered. Paul was so tired when he was hanging them that he did not take the time to inspect the lights and wiring for any obvious damage. If Paul had taken care of himself and not felt stressed, he could have noticed the damaged lights and avoided this accident.