

Coping with holiday stress

The holiday season is often associated with joy, togetherness, and celebration, but it can also bring along a fair amount of stress. Balancing family gatherings, travel plans, shopping lists, and financial considerations can leave many feeling overwhelmed.

Here are some practical aspects to consider when managing holiday stress and to make the season more enjoyable.

- **Set realistic expectations** - Accept that things may not go exactly as planned, and that's okay! Instead of aiming for a picture-perfect holiday, focus on meaningful connections and the joy of the season.
- **Budget wisely** - Set a strict budget for gifts, food, and other expenses, and stick to it. Consider alternatives like handmade gifts, or a family Secret Santa to reduce costs. Meaningful gestures often mean more than material items.
- **Prioritise travel safety** - Plan your route in advance, allow extra travel time, and avoid driving if you're feeling drowsy. Check that your vehicle is in good working condition. Patience is key - keep a safe following distance, adhere to speed limits, and stay calm.
- **Stay organised** - Plan in advance to stay organised and on track. Make lists for gifts, meal planning, and errands, and set realistic timelines for each and consider delegating some tasks to family members.
- **Practice saying "No"** - It is okay to politely decline certain gatherings or activities to free up time for activities that matter most to you.



Additional points to focus on to reduce holiday stress:

- Maintain healthy habits and aim to balance indulgence with healthy choices, self-care and stay active.
- Be mindful of family dynamics and drama – avoid stressful situations.
- Focus on experiences, not perfection and create memorable holidays that focus on shared laughter, love and connection.
- Practice breathing techniques or meditation to ease stress and boost resilience.
- Plan for rest and recovery, especially if you're hosting or travelling.
- And lastly...during the holiday season, caring for the less fortunate can make a profound difference, bringing warmth and joy to those in need, and will also escalate your own dopamine levels and help you to enjoy the holiday season.



1 December is World Aids Day

World AIDS Day brings together people from around the world to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and demonstrate international solidarity in the face of the pandemic. WHO provides statistics on [HIV statistics, globally and by WHO region, 2024](#).

Summary of the global HIV epidemic, 2023

	People living with HIV	People acquiring HIV	People dying from HIV-related causes
Total	39.9 million	1.3 million	630 thousand
Adults (15+ years)	38.6 million	1.2 million	560 thousand
Women (15+ years)	20.5 million	520 thousand	240 thousand
Men (15+ years)	18.1 million	660 thousand	320 thousand
Children (under 15 years)	1.4 million	120 thousand	76 thousand