



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

# WORKPLACE HEALTH



## Beating the Winter Blues

Up to 20% of Canadians get a type of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) called the "winter blues." In Northern climates like Canada, there is less sunlight during the winter. Because of electricity, the days during winter are longer than they would be without it. This can make it hard for the body to know when to sleep and when to be awake (our sleep-wake cycle). If a person has trouble adjusting their sleep-wake cycle in the winter, then they might start experiencing the winter blues. Some signs and symptoms of the winter blues include:

- Less energy and sleeping more
- Weight gain and eating more (especially sweet and starchy food)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability and restlessness.

Compared to SAD, people with winter blues are still able to go on with their daily lives. Women are more likely to have the winter blues than men. Diagnosis and treatment from a doctor are not needed for the winter blues, and there are a couple of easy things you can do to help prevent and fight them!

For starters, you can do something as simple as get more light:

- Try to get as much sunlight as possible at home, at work, and during all other activities (keep curtains open, sit by

windows, and add lamps and skylights in your house or workplace)

- Spend more time outdoors during the day, especially when skies are clear and sunny.

It is also important to be physically active. This relieves stress, builds energy and self-esteem, makes you feel better mentally and physically, and lets you get out to meet and talk with people. Try to be active outdoors during the day as much as possible. You can do things like park farther away from the entrances at work so that you walk more. If you need to be indoors, try to stay close to a window or other sources of light. Try a new indoor activity such as:

- Bowling
- Curling
- Volleyball
- Mall-walking

Make sure you also eat healthy! Avoid high-calorie foods that can cause weight gain. Try to have lower fat and higher fibre meals and snacks more often:

- Choose healthier "comfort foods" and snacks during the winter such as oatmeal, broth-based soups, and dishes made with beans and lentils
- Take your lunch to work more often

- Share more meals with family and friends to stay socially connected during the winter:

And finally, try to schedule a regular sleep routine! Wake up and go to bed at the same time, even on days off from work. This will help keep your sleep-wake cycle on track with the changes in daylight and darkness during winter.

*Canadian Mental Health Association, 2012*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

*January:*

- January – Alzheimer Awareness Month
- Jan. 15-21 – National Non-Smoking Week
- Jan. 27 – Family Literacy Day

*February:*

- Heart Health Month



## Creating a Supportive Workplace Smoking Cessation Environment

**Adult smoking trends in Haldimand and Norfolk for smokers (20 years of age and older) have increased from 19.8% (2009) to 25% (2010), which is higher than the provincial average.**

### Dear Workplace Partner,

I would like to introduce you to a resource that guides workplaces in creating a supportive environment that encourages employee's to quit smoking. It is a well-known fact how difficult it can be for someone to quit smoking because of the addiction to nicotine. For this reason, it takes several repeated attempts for someone to quit smoking. For most people, a good part of our day is spent at work which provides a unique opportunity to intervene with smokers to help them quit smoking. Health Canada has created a guide titled "Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A Guide to Helping your Employees Quit Smoking". This guide contains practical tools that provides information on how to integrate smoking cessation activities as part of a comprehensive workplace wellness program or as a program on its own. In the planning stages, you can refer to the guide for tools on how to

conduct a needs assessment with employees to find out the types of programs they would be interested in to quit smoking. You can also estimate the cost of smoking in your workplace or use the several handouts i.e. "Tips for Cutting Down or Quitting Smoking" provided in the guide. By providing support for smoking cessation to employees, your workplace will benefit from increased productivity, reduced costs, enhanced job satisfaction, and promote a better corporate image in the community.

For a **FREE** copy of this guide or a consultation on how to create a supportive environment to help employees quit smoking you can contact our Tobacco Use Prevention Health Promoter at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-5367 or via e-mail [fiaza.siddiqi@hnhu.org](mailto:fiaza.siddiqi@hnhu.org).

Reference: Canadian Community Health Survey 2007, 2009, 2012. Statistics Canada, Shared File, Knowledge Management and Reporting Branch, Ontario MOHLTC.

# 10 Tips for Hosting a Safe Holiday Party

**The holiday season is a special time to get together with family and friends in a warm, welcoming and safe environment. If alcohol is present at parties, there are many things you can do to reduce the risk of harm to yourself and your guests:**

1. Follow Canada's updated Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines.
  - Women – have no more than 2 drinks\* a day most days and no more than 10 drinks a week. On special occasions, limit to no more than 3 drinks.
  - Men – have no more than 3 drinks a day most days and no more than 15 drinks a week. On special occasions, limit to no more than 4 drinks.

\*one drink = 12 oz. beer; 5 oz. wine or 1.5 oz. liquor like rye, rum or vodka
2. Make sure non-alcoholic drinks are available to guests at all times.
3. Remember the legal drinking age in Ontario is 19. Do not serve alcohol to those underage.
4. Serve drinks yourself (and steer clear of 'doubles!') instead of having an open bar. Guests usually drink more when they serve themselves.
5. Serve snacks! It's better to eat while drinking than to drink on an empty stomach. Try veggies with light dip and cheeses – they won't make your guests thirsty like salty, sweet or greasy foods do.
6. Stop serving alcohol a few hours before the party is over. Bring out more alcohol-free drinks and food.
7. Be prepared for overnight guests with pillows and sleeping bags.
8. Be prepared to take car keys away if necessary and know your designated drivers. Have cash and phone numbers ready for taxis.
9. Don't plan physical activities like swimming, skiing, snowmobiling or skating when you serve alcohol. People are more prone to accidents when they've been drinking.
10. Don't drink too much yourself. You'll be able to stay on top of potential problems better when you can think clearly and act quickly.

**Responsible drinking and hosting will help ensure enjoyable holiday get-togethers for everyone. Have a safe and happy holiday season!**



## RECIPE

### Crunchy Pear & Celery Salad

#### Ingredients

- 4 stalks celery, trimmed and cut in half crosswise
- 2 tablespoons cider, pear, raspberry or other fruit vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 ripe pears, preferably red Bartlett or Anjou, diced
- 1 cup finely diced white Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted (*see tip*)
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 6 large leaves butterhead or other lettuce

#### Preparation

1. Soak celery in a bowl of ice water for 15 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Cut into 1/2-inch pieces.
2. Whisk vinegar, honey and salt in a large bowl until blended. Add pears; gently stir to coat. Add the celery, cheese and pecans; stir to combine. Season with pepper. Divide the lettuce leaves among 6 plates and top with a portion of salad. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

#### Tips & Notes

**Make Ahead Tip:** Prepare salad without pecans up to 2 hours ahead. Stir in pecans just before serving.

**Tip:** To toast chopped pecans, cook in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.

Reference - <http://www.eatingwell.com>

## Infection Prevention and Control Practices to Remember during the Holiday Season

With the holiday season upon us family gatherings and work parties are taking place, which leads to many people together in a common place- a perfect opportunity for bugs to mingle as well. Keeping this in mind, here are basic infection prevention and control measures that can be practiced:

### 1. Clean your hands frequently

Cleaning your hands can be washing your hands with soap and water as well as using alcohol based hand rub (ABHR). When your hands are visibly dirty (you can see food on them) they should be washed with soap and water. When you are unsure if your hands are clean, you cannot see any dirt or germs on them alcohol based hand rub should be used.

### 2. Get your annual flu vaccine

The flu vaccine is offered and recommended every year free of charge for everyone. The flu vaccine offers protection against the flu viruses circulating in the community and is a great preventative measure of getting sick and/or spreading your sickness to someone else.

### 3. Stay home when you are sick

Holidays are often a time when you gather with friends and family who you may not have seen in a while, and this is often a big incentive to attend. But if you are not feeling well, it is recommended that you don't visit during that time as you will bring more than just holiday cheer. Improvise by calling or skyping these events from the comfort and protection of your own home.

### 4. Cover your cough or sneeze in your sleeve

Covering your cough or sneezing in your sleeve traps the germs in your clothing to prevent the spread into the air, or onto someone else, or an object that may potentially infect at a later time. Commonly people want to sneeze into their hands. It is strongly recommended to avoid this practice. After you sneeze or cough, be sure to also perform hand hygiene.

### 5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

Germs can easily be introduced into one's body via their dirty hands touching eyes, nose and or mouth. This can include when you are eating or preparing food, which happens often during the holiday season as well. Be sure to always wash your hands before eating, before preparing food, after using the washroom and anytime you are unsure of your hands whereabouts.

