

Healthy Workplace

Your monthly Anthem wellness newsletter

Anthem  

December 2020 Edition



CT Pipe Trades



Staying Mentally & Physically Fit This Holiday Season



As we approach the end of 2020, we are in the thick of the holiday season and winter. This time of year can already be challenging for many from a mental health perspective, and adding in the COVID-19 pandemic will likely make things more difficult. Here are some tips to help.

Prepare for a different experience this holiday season.

Remind yourself as much as you need to — it's only going to be like this this year. We've already passed many holidays: Easter, Yom Kippur, 4th of July, Labor Day. This is one more set of holidays that is going to be different. We need to keep everybody safe in gatherings, so maybe that means smaller amount of people, sticking to your family unit or celebrating with extended family virtually.

How can we handle changes in long held traditions?

If you typically have big family gatherings, think about what you would do at those gatherings and see if you can replicate them with your immediate family. Perhaps have the same gifting ritual, same food ritual or pass recipes around. If that feels too weird or there aren't enough people, maybe it's best to abandon the tradition for this year. Sometimes it can feel too empty to alter the tradition, so do something completely different. Remind yourself that you can return to your rituals as they were in 2021. Find a way to make it special for you this year.

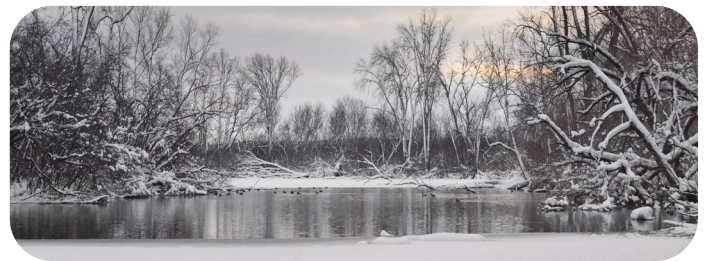
Staying active this holiday season.

If the gym is no longer an option, then walking always is. We can do this no matter the cold, as long as we wear the appropriate gear. If it is too snowy, slushy or frigid, have some videos lined up for cardio and weight workouts, Pilates or yoga to stay fit and active. Put exercise and movement into your schedule as must do's, just like meetings or appointments.

Article Source: <https://www.nm.org/about-us/northwestern-medicine-newsroom/nm-news-blog/maintaining-good-mental-health-during-the-holidays-and-winter>

Mental health during the cold and dark of winter.

Do what works for you to keep your thoughts positive: gratitude journaling/exercises, practicing your faith. Remind yourself that winter is temporary and spring light will come again. Put positive activities that you like into each week: visits (physical distanced and masked) with friends and family, special dinners, reading a real page-turner, watching a TV series that you enjoy; taking up a project or hobby. Productivity really helps our mental health. Reach out to someone you trust if your thinking is getting negative or irrational.



Tips for staying healthy during the winter months.

Make sleep a priority, followed by exercise and nutrition. Keep up handwashing, mask wearing and physical distancing for your protection and others. Take vitamins, eat healthfully, and limit alcohol. Keep up the exercise. These are all immune-boosting practices and we should take them seriously now more than ever.

Get dressed by a certain time every day and put on work clothes for work, even if working remotely. Keep up with personal hygiene. Use skin lotion in the winter as our skin dries out in low humidity and heated environments. Beyond taking care of yourself physically, monitor your thought patterns and change them to positive thoughts as much as possible. If you find you cannot do these, then seek a mental health counselor or talk to your primary care physician.



Curried Chicken and Rice Soup

A perfect recipe for a cold winter day, and a favorite of both children and adults!



INGREDIENTS

- 2 chicken breasts (about 1 1/2 pounds)
- 2 medium carrots, sliced diagonally into 2-inch pieces
- 1 bay leaf
- Kosher salt
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Madras curry powder
- 1/3 cup jasmine rice
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the chicken, carrots, bay leaf and a pinch of salt in a medium saucepan. Add 3 cups broth and bring to a boil; immediately reduce the heat to low, cover and cook until the chicken is just firm, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat the butter in another saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the onion, sugar and 1 teaspoon salt; cook until the onion is soft, 5 minutes. Add the curry powder and cook for 1 minute. Add the rice and the remaining 3 cups broth. Increase the

heat to medium, cover and simmer until the rice falls apart, 15 to 20 minutes.

3. Remove the chicken from its broth; shred the meat into pieces. Return the shredded chicken to the same broth.
4. Puree the rice mixture with an immersion blender until smooth (or use a regular blender, then return to the pan). Pour in the shredded chicken and broth, stirring gently to combine; bring to a simmer. Toss in the chopped herbs and serve the soup with lemon wedges.

HELPFUL TIPS

If you don't have an immersion blender — when blending hot liquid, first let it cool for five minutes or so, then transfer it to a blender, filling only halfway. Put the lid on, leaving one corner open. Cover the lid with a kitchen towel to catch splatters, and pulse until smooth.

My favorite kitchen trick is to shred chicken with a hand mixer! It is so easy. Place the pieces into a deep mixing bowl and press the beaters of your mixer into the meat. Turn the mixer on a low speed and let the paddles work through the chicken until it's fully shredded. Repeat with remaining boneless chicken breasts or thighs.

DID YOU KNOW?

Curry powder is a mixture of spices with a bright golden hue and a complex flavor. It can be made with a variety of spices, usually including turmeric, coriander, cumin, fenugreek, and chili pepper. Other common additions are ginger, black pepper, mustard seeds, curry leaves, and fennel seeds.

The combination of spices found in curry powder makes this seasoning a great way to add flavor and nutritional benefits to your dishes. The spice blend is rich in anti-inflammatory compounds and consuming it may help reduce oxidative stress, boost heart health, and improve blood sugar levels, among other potential benefits.



Wellness Bites for your Quick Wellness Needs!

WINTER SAFETY REMINDERS

The cold and snowy months of winter are here! While many of us are distracted by the many other things we have on our minds, it is always important to be mindful of winter safety needs.

AT HOME

Winterize your home.

- ◆ Install weather strip-ping, insulation, & storm windows.
- ◆ Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls.
- ◆ Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks.



Check your heating systems.

- ◆ Have your heating system serviced to make sure it is clean, working properly, and ventilated to the outside.
- ◆ Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys.
- ◆ If you don't have a working smoke detector, install one. Test batteries monthly and replace them twice a year.
- ◆ Have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuels available.
- ◆ Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) emergencies:
 - ◇ Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas. Check batteries when you change your clocks in the fall and spring.
 - ◇ Learn symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

ON THE ROAD

Stock your vehicle.

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving tasks, such as cleaning off your windshield, as well as any supplies you might need in an emergency:

- ◆ Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.
- ◆ Abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
- ◆ Jumper cables, flashlight, and warning devices such as flares and markers.
- ◆ Blankets for protection from the cold.
- ◆ A cell phone with charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine (for longer trips or when driving in lightly populated areas).



Learn what to do in a winter emergency.

If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather, follow these safety rules:

- ◆ Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself.
- ◆ Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.
- ◆ Don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically — just long enough to stay warm.

Protect yourself and your loved ones.

- ◆ Remember to always wear your seat belt. Ensure that everyone in your vehicle is buckled up as well.
- ◆ Do not text or engage in any other activities that may distract you while driving.
- ◆ While thick outerwear will keep your children warm, it can also interfere with the proper harness fit of your child in their car seat. Place blankets around your child after the harness is snug and secure.
- ◆ Never leave your child unattended in or around your vehicle.

SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS

Keep safe from the cold weather and prevent injuries.

- ◆ Wear multiple layers of clothing to stay warm, as well as a hat, scarf, mittens, water-resistant jacket and boots. Stay as dry as possible, as water against the skin from wet clothing can chill the body quickly.
- ◆ Don't ignore shivering. If you shiver persistently while outdoors, it's a sign that you need to return inside.
- ◆ Avoid over-exerting yourself while shoveling snow or performing any other hard work or heavy lifting. Extreme cold puts extra strain on your heart and cardiovascular system. Heed your doctor's advice if you have experienced any signs of heart disease or high blood pressure in the past. If you don't have to do outdoor chores in the cold, wait until the storm passes and the outside temperature warms up.
- ◆ Avoid ice wherever possible. It's extremely easy to fall on ice-covered pavement, sidewalks, and stairs. Many winter weather injuries occur on icy surfaces like these. Use rock salt or other de-icing chemicals to keep your porch, driveway and sidewalk as free of ice as possible, or spread sand to reduce the risk of slipping.



Sources: www.nhtsa.org; www.weather.com; <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/winterweather/index.html>