



Managing the Festive Season

Prepared by Tracey Larsen



In New Zealand, Christmas, summer holidays and road trips to visit family all go hand in hand and gets all wrapped up together under the umbrella of "The Festive Season" Today we will be sharing tips to help navigate this busy time of year, discussing how to reduce stress at Christmas, how to keep cool in the summer heat and some tips when travelling.

Reduce Stress at Christmas and Avoid Over Exertions

Make a list – It works for Santa! Checking items off a list gives a sense of accomplishment and is satisfying in itself. Lists also ensure you remember what you need to accomplish. For those of you who hate making lists, because it feels like you never cross anything off it, write of list of what you have achieved.

Prioritise – Attend to what is most important and set your own realistic boundaries. Avoid being caught up in the frenzy of Christmas. It is important to attend to the evergreen basics – sleep, rest and eating well.

Decorate like a minimalist – If you are able to decorate, there is no need to decorate the whole house, just the social areas where others can enjoy them. Simple decorations on the table or mantel can be just as effective as to can a wee plastic miniature tree.

Ask for help – Don't feel the pressure of providing the entire meal for everyone. Go potluck! Delegate dishes out to other members of the family.

Lower others' expectations – Be realistic by creating your own idea of the perfect Christmas that suits you and your family. This is a good time to start creating your own family tradition of what Christmas looks like for your family. It doesn't have to be anything like a traditional Christmas you read about in the magazines.

Buy online – No need to cope with busy shopping centres or supermarkets, but order early so they arrive on time.

Delegate - A problem shared is a problem halved. Plan to have Christmas at someone else's house, so all you need to do is turn up.

Learn to say NO – Learning to say no to other's demands can be a struggle at this time of year, so start thinking of your needs when family and social activities are being planned. Just because it is Christmas doesn't mean that you should alter the boundaries you have worked hard to establish. If anything, this is a time of year you need to stick more readily to your boundaries.

Planning – Ensure you plan adequate rest periods throughout the weeks leading up to, and after, Christmas

Rest – Rest up whenever and wherever possible. Use pre-emptive resting strategies so your batteries are re-charged regularly throughout the festive season.

BREATHE: If you feel the stress rising, or start to feel overwhelmed, remember to take a few minutes out regularly to BREATHE – long and slow right, down to your belly.

Meal Energy-Saving Tips for Christmas and the Holidays

Dear Santa, all I want for Christmas is....

Invest in a slow cooker, blender and food processor. These tools are great to use when energy is low or pain in your hands makes chopping food difficult.

Prepare food at your highest energy times of the day – when you feel organised you feel emotionally better.

When feeling well, cook large meals and freeze, or use leftovers for lunch and/or dinner the next day.

When preparing a meal, bulk prepare vegs and store in snap lock bags for meals later in the week. Make enough salad and coleslaw to last several days.

Eating out? Ring the restaurant before hand to see which meals can be tailored to your digestive needs – take own dressing or sauce if need be.

Invited to a dinner party? Communicate with the host to see if certain dishes can be tailored to your digestive needs.

Travel Tips

Rest adequately before you travel – this may be required for several days or weeks before you leave, so you can enjoy your much anticipated holiday.



Plan your trip well – plenty of rest stops and rest time between train, plane, bus or car trips to avoid rushing.

Pack well in advance – don't leave it to the last minute. Make a list of last-minute items such as toiletries and medications.

Pack light if you must carry your bags. Use luggage with wheels. Make use of a trolley at airports.

Wheelchairs - make use of wheelchairs at airports – Airports are big places and require lots of walking. Prearrange with airport staff to support you through the terminal with your luggage and wheelchair.

Remember to pack an adequate supply of medications and supplements. Take a note from your GP detailing your medication requirements. Using blister packs helps you to keep track of your medication, especially if travelling through different time zones

If you experience sensory overload, use ear plugs/earmuffs and a sleep mask when travelling.

For those with POTS or OI, recline your seat in the car (if you are the passenger!). Some have found putting their feet up on the dashboard helpful. Other helpful tips from clients, is to use a magnetic bracelet designed for travel sickness and take ginger supplements/gummies for nausea when travelling.

Where possible take extra food supplies – especially if you have special food requirements.

Keep Cool This Summer and Sleep Better

Keep well hydrated.

Place ice cubes, ice packs, or cold presses on your pulse points – inner wrists, base of neck, chest, inner elbows, under breasts, groin, ankles and behind the knees.

Wear loose cotton breathable clothing - stay away or polyester fabrics

Be mindful of the hat you wear, some heat up your head, so find a breathable one. Or just wear a slide on peak

Use cotton sheets on your bed instead of polyester.

Dampen a sarong or cotton sheet and place on top of you when going to bed

Fill up your rubber bed hotty with cold water and freeze. Place in your bed before going to bed.

If energy allows, have a cool shower before going to bed.

Place a fan facing out of the window to pull the hot air from inside to send outside. Also place a bucket of ice in front of the fan so it blows cool air.

Invest is a hydro vest, or pet cooling pad for yourself to lie on.



And lastly, go well, go safe over the festive season.

CCIS wish you all a safe, relaxing, and refreshing holiday season.

