



HEALTHY LIVING SECTION

Weekly tips and advice from your neighborhood Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge providers.



Tips for Parents: Master the Holidays at Home or on the Road

Traditions

This holiday season, make time to create special memories for children. It's amazing how children view the spirit of holidays. Let them make cookies with grandma or help decorate the house with dad. It's never too late to start family traditions either: Go for a drive in search of holiday light displays, have a holiday movie marathon or playfully argue about who gets to DJ the family dance party. No matter how you celebrate, try to savor the moments that leave a lasting impression and take time to be grateful.

There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays

Staying put and avoiding traffic can make the holidays less stressful, especially if you have a newborn or a toddler. Taking time to baby-proof your home, or wherever you're staying for the holidays, can help reduce stress by helping avoid accidents. If you have toddlers in your home, consider only decorating the top half of your tree so ornaments and lights are out of their reach.

Coming Down the Chimney

Fireplaces are a festive and beautiful part of the holidays, but unfortunately, they also attract small children. Fireplace screens aren't considered childproof and glass doors get and stay hot, even after a fire is out. So be watchful when using a fireplace with small children in the house. You should also consider permanent hooks in the mantle as opposed to weighted stocking holders, which can fall and cause serious injury.

Give the Gift of Tech (Responsibly)

It's a good idea for parents and children to set rules about using smartphones, tablets and gaming systems. Here are some ideas to consider about children and high-tech gadgets:

1. Tell children they can only use the gadget if certain conditions are met; write up a contract to avoid arguments.
2. Set out clear expectations regarding grades and behavior, and reward or punish accordingly.
3. For parents with children who use smartphones, consider invoking the Grandma Rule: "Don't send or post anything online you wouldn't want grandma to see."
4. No tech at the table, whether it's in the kitchen, the dining room or at a restaurant: talk, don't text.

Give to Others – As Long as It's Not the Flu

Getting a flu shot is like wearing a seat belt. It does not keep you from getting the flu any more than a seat belt prevents you from getting in an accident. But if you do get the flu, the shot helps protect your body better. It is the season of giving, but please spread joy, not germs.



A Healthier Cranberry Sauce

Cranberries are an excellent source of vitamin C, manganese and dietary fiber; plus, a half-cup serving is only 25 calories.

- 2 bags of fresh cranberries, about 24 ounces
- 3/4 cup pineapple juice
- 1/2 cup apple sauce
- 1/2 cup water
- Juice and zest of one orange
- 3 tablespoons of honey (optional)

Bring cranberries, pineapple juice, apple sauce and water to a boil in a saucepan. Reduce to medium heat and stir constantly until the cranberries begin to burst, about 10 to 15 minutes. Reduce heat to a simmer and pour the orange juice and zest over the cranberry mixture. Simmer for an additional 10 to 15 minutes and remove from heat. Cool completely, then store in refrigerator overnight or at least 4 hours. **Serves: 8**



Holiday Hoopla

Friday, December 9 | 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge invites you to meet Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, a host of elves and many other special guests during our Holiday Hoopla.

Call Eileen Sharpe at 828-580-7954 to schedule your time.

Free | Reservations Required | Seating Limited

Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge – Valdese, 720 Malcolm Boulevard



Medicine Cabinet Safety

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Every medicine cabinet in the country probably has at least one over-the-counter (OTC) medication in it. Whether it is something to help with headaches, athlete's foot or back pain, OTC medications are widely available and relatively easy to purchase. However, simply because they have a place in everyday life does not mean they should be regarded lightly. Consider the following when using over-the-counter medications:

Warning Labels: They aren't there for decoration. You should read them before taking any medication to inform yourself of potential side effects and other negative reactions.

Dose: It is very important to know how much to take and for how long. Prolonged use or exceeding the recommended dosage can have negative effects on your body. Acetaminophen, for example, is a common pain reliever, but too much of it can cause damage to your liver.

Expiration Date: This can be a confusing concept. The expiration dates on medications don't mean the medicine will spoil or go bad after that date like a food product might. Instead the date is more of a guarantee that you will be receiving its full potency and doing so safely. Many medications can still be safely taken years after the expiration date has passed.

Pregnancy: Expectant mothers should consult with their doctor regarding what OTC medications and how much of them are safe to take. Similar to eating for two, your unborn baby will receive a portion of the medicine.

Children: Kids aren't simply small adults who need a lesser amount of full-strength medicines. They should be given child's-strength medications. If those aren't available to you, consult with a pediatrician or a family doctor about safe alternatives.

Interactions: Even though they are considered safe, many OTC products can interact negatively with prescription medicines or certain health conditions you may have. As an example, aspirin should not be taken with blood thinners or if you have diabetes or gout.

While it is important to consult with your doctor before taking many medications, you don't always have to. If you have a headache and aren't taking other medicines and don't have a health condition that could be affected, go ahead and take the recommended dose of a pain reliever. However, it's always better to be safe than sorry, so if you aren't certain, pick up the phone and make a call. If you have questions regarding over-the-counter medicines, please call us at 828-652-8727.

