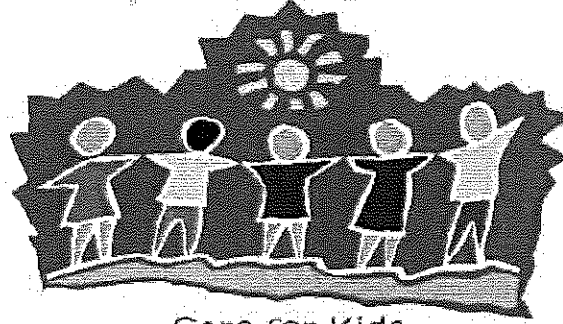


School Nurses



Care for Kids

Elementary Newsletter

December 2016

Topic: Holiday Stress and Anxiety in Children

The holidays are a fun and joyous time but also a very busy one, and holiday stress and anxiety in children is something that parent often become more aware of at this time of year. During the holidays, there are lots of fun activities and events going on, both at home and at school. And while all these things can bring a lot of fun they also can affect your child's schedule, routine, sleep and even their diet. Below are some tips that may help your child enjoy the holidays without undue stress.

1. **Set a calm example** - try and keep things as relaxed as possible. A parent's stress often transfers to a child.
2. **Set up conditions for good behavior** - avoid overstimulating your child with gatherings, shopping, etc when they are hungry or tired. They are more likely to experience holiday stress when they are hungry or exhausted and more likely to behave well when rested and fed.
3. **Keeping Routines in place and schedule quiet time** - keep daily routines in place as much as possible and create some time for quiet activities such as reading with your child.
4. **Watching your child's diet** - it's so easy to eat less healthy foods during the holidays and sometimes more food than is normally eaten. Try packing healthy snacks when you go shopping or are running holiday errands, limiting candies/cookies and sweet treats to special times.

5. **Keep moving** - fresh air and exercise are essential for boosting mood and re-setting the spirit, which can alleviate holiday stress and anxiety in children.
6. **Avoid overscheduling** - a family can receive multiple invitations for gatherings of family and friends. Try to limit holiday parties and activities so that you and your child are not overwhelmed.
7. **Involve your child in the planning** - include your children in shopping and preparations when they are well rested. It will increase their enjoyment of the season and boost their self esteem.
8. **Keep things in perspective**- avoid blowing events out of proportion and teach your child how to keep things in perspective including what type and the number of gifts they receive. A great way to keep perspective during this season of great commercialism is to focus on helping others (shoveling a driveway for an elderly neighbor, wrapping gifts for children in need, etc). Helping your child become charitable will help alleviate holiday stress and anxiety.

Source: American Psychological Association and Anne Arundel County Dept. of Health, Annapolis, MD.