

the guide

december

Happy, healthy holidays

By Leslie Goldman

Funny how what's supposed to be a celebration turns into something that you have to "survive." Well, not this year. Our guide takes the stress out of your holidays by giving you everything from gift ideas for your special friends and family (starting on page 134) to tips that'll help you stop bingeing at the buffet table and overspending at the mall. What's more, we'll show you how to avoid that real holiday wrecker—trying to do way too much all by yourself. Stephanie Woo, PhD, associate professor of psychology at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology, says, "When you realize catastrophe is not lurking around every unfinished to-do, you can focus on what you really enjoy." Hear, hear!

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Is your home safe for the holidays?

Oh, the things that can go wrong at such a festive time. Here's how to avoid health traps around the house this season.

Not-so-fresh air

Smoke from wood burning in the **fireplace** can bother some people with allergies and asthma. Throw some fancy metallic wrapping paper onto the fire, though, and you've got an even bigger problem:

The paper can release toxic fumes when burned.

Oh, and those fire salts that create colored flames aren't a good idea, either.

If ingested they can cause gastrointestinal problems and vomiting.

'Tis the season ...

... to be jolly—and to get the flu. If you think you're coming down with something, avoid the kiss under the **mistletoe** and opt for chicken soup in bed. Keep that mistletoe away from pets and children, too: It's poisonous if ingested.

Treats gone bad

Remember the two-hour rule when it comes to food poisoning. Items like cheese, eggnog, creamy dips made with mayonnaise, and **deviled eggs** can grow harmful bacteria quickly when left out for more than two hours.

Try setting a kitchen timer to remind you to toss and replenish.

Diet busters

Those holiday treats are oh-so-tempting. But overdo them (two slices of the traditional **Yule log** can easily surpass the 1,000-calorie mark), and you'll gain more than some next-day sugar blues.



Illustration: Diane Bigda

Too hot for comfort
Place your **holiday tree** away from heating vents and direct sunlight (to keep it from drying out) and several feet from the fireplace. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, Christmas trees are involved in about 300 fires annually, leading to 20 deaths, 40 injuries, and an average \$8 million in property damage and loss.

Trimming tips

There could be bad news about that old **tinsel** that Grandma left you: If it hangs really nice and straight, it probably contains lead. Replace it with the safer plastic variety. And take care when spraying artificial snow on your tree; inhaling the fumes could make you sick.

Don't get burned

It's easy to forget about **burning candles**—or to place them too close to flammable objects (on window ledges near curtains, on bookshelves). Maybe this will help you remember: There are more than 23,600 candle-related residential fires each year, resulting in 165 deaths and \$390 million in property loss, according to the U.S. Fire Administration.

Decorating dangers

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people each year for falls, cuts, shocks, and burns caused by faulty **holiday lights**, dried-out Christmas trees, and other decorating mishaps.

Sick as a dog

Scruffy wants to celebrate, too. But keep your canine away from the season's **sweet treats, particularly chocolate**. Toxicity increases as sweetness decreases, so dark or unsweetened chocolate (used in baking) is more poisonous than milk chocolate. Side effects include vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, hyperactivity, and increased heart rate.

Light headed

When choosing your **cocktail**, maybe light isn't better. Drinking booze with diet sodas (like rum and diet cola) can lead to a higher rate of alcohol absorption in the body, making you tipsy before you know it. 

Stay calm this season

Feeling overwhelmed? Friends and family can help make your holiday feel less frazzled.



News flash:

You're not the only one wrapping presents at 2 a.m. or burning that last batch of cookies because you're trying to do too many things at once. "We have this cowboy kind of mentality in America that we should be able to handle everything ourselves," says Jeanne S. Hurlbert, PhD, professor of sociology at Louisiana State University. "But that's unrealistic. You can't handle everything on your own—and you shouldn't try. The question shouldn't be, 'How can I solve the problem?' but 'Where can I turn in my network for help?'"

Your network of family and friends really can help you manage holiday stress. And you can help them, too. Wrapping gifts? Invite some friends over to make the job go a lot faster. And don't worry if your house isn't up to *Architectural Digest* standards, either. Just grab some instant hot chocolate, clear a table, and you'll end up laughing, having a good

time," Hurlbert says.

Draw on each others' respective strengths. If your sister loves baking but is decorating-challenged, maybe you can deck her halls while she whips up some brownies for your cookie exchange. Or compare errand lists with a neighbor and pool trips to the mall or post office, reducing stress, saving money on gas, and helping the environment.

The it-takes-a-village approach to holiday chores does more than help the season run more smoothly—it ensures you don't become too isolated, which is a real health risk for women, Hurlbert says. "Holidays are about enjoying people. But the irony is you become so focused that you can easily end up feeling isolated and stressed. This is particularly true for women. With getting all the gifts, taking the kids to school, and more, you can spend your entire holiday in the car."

Reach out to your support network, so you can stay calm, cool, and connected.

Healthy holiday tricks



"I make my own holiday cards by mounting favorite photos I've taken. And I always write personal notes using a fine-tip old-fashioned fountain pen. To stay calm and watch my weight during the holidays, I like to indulge in all sorts of flavored teas. That's much better than nibbling away on treats." —Sarah Ferguson, 48, the Duchess of York



"I have an annual holiday ladies' night. I set up my bedroom so we can relax while each of us gets a 30-minute massage, a mani, and a pedi. Then we decorate the tree and eat while wrapping gifts and sipping mimosas!" —Latashia DeVeaux, 30, Los Angeles



"To avoid getting financially stressed out, I try to think of meaningful gifts and make what I can, even if it means uploading pictures to Shutterfly.com and having them framed and shipped through Art.com. A picture doesn't cost as much and is worth more in emotional currency than an impersonal gift." —Jennifer Conlin, 30, Madison, Wisconsin



"I'm from Chicago and planned a big Christmas party at my parents' home in Boston. Believe it or not, I used an Excel spreadsheet to divide up duties! Each sheet detailed exactly what each person had to do and all the contact, budget, and any other information they needed. It worked great, and the party was a hit." —Renata Beggstone, 34, Chicago

"If I'm going to a party, I make sure I work out before I go. Even 20 minutes is better than nothing; it's fitness in the bank. Then, when you get to the party, you can say, 'I'm going to have a little slice of pumpkin pie. And it's OK because I've already worked out.'" —Valerie Waters, 42, Los Angeles-based celebrity trainer for actress Jennifer Garner and model Cindy Crawford



Sometimes I feel down after the holidays. Is that normal?

It sounds like you're suffering from postholiday slump. And, hey, this is perfectly normal. When the sparkly party dresses get packed away and "It's the most wonderful time..." stops blaring in stores everywhere, it can be easy to feel bummed out. Much like planning a wedding, it can be natural to feel a bit let down afterward.

Rather than view the coming months as a holding pattern until spring, David Baron, professor and chairman of the department of psychiatry at Temple University, suggests you plan fun activities that keep you connected with your social networks. Ask friends to e-mail you their most fabulous photos from your New Year's Eve party and host an informal, mid-January potluck, during which you play a slide show.

Or arrange a February ski trip. "Plan something you can look forward to instead of just trying to survive the winter doldrums," Baron says.



Photo: Ryan McVay/Stone/getty Images

If this sadness has sprung up before, look back and try to ID the cause. Are you overeating or overspending and then dealing with the consequences in the New Year? Do your resolutions always crash? Being prepared and having a sense of control can be empowering and protective, Baron says.

Of course, if your slump turns into something more serious—if you start to experience feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, for instance—see your physician to rule out a more serious psychological condition like depression.

assays conducted in mouse and rat. Ramelteon was positive in the chromosomal aberration assay in Chinese hamster lung cells in the presence of S9 metabolic activation.

Separate studies indicated that the concentration of the M-II metabolite formed by the rat liver S9 fraction used in the *in vitro* genetic toxicology studies described above, exceeded the concentration of ramelteon; therefore, the genotoxic potential of the M-II metabolite was also assessed in these studies.

Impairment of Fertility

Ramelteon was administered to male and female Sprague-Dawley rats in an initial fertility and early embryonic development study at dose levels of 6, 60, or 600 mg/kg/day. No effects on male or female mating or fertility were observed with a ramelteon dose up to 600 mg/kg/day (786-times higher than the MRHD on a mg/m² basis). Irregular estrus cycles, reduction in the number of implants, and reduction in the number of live embryos were noted with dosing females at ≥ 60 mg/kg/day (79-times higher than the MRHD on a mg/m² basis). A reduction in the number of corpora lutea occurred at the 600 mg/kg/day dose level. Administration of ramelteon up to 600 mg/kg/day to male rats for 7 weeks had no effect on sperm quality and when the treated male rats were mated with untreated female rats there was no effect on implants or embryos. In a repeat of this study using oral administration of ramelteon at 20, 60 or 200 mg/kg/day for the same study duration, females demonstrated irregular estrus cycles with doses ≥ 60 mg/kg/day, but no effects were seen on implantation or embryo growth. The no-effect dose for fertility endpoints was 20 mg/kg/day in females (26-times the MRHD on a mg/m² basis) and 600 mg/kg/day in males (786-times higher than the MRHD on a mg/m² basis) when considering all studies.

Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category C

Ramelteon has been shown to be a developmental teratogen in the rat when given in doses 197 times higher than the maximum recommended human dose [MRHD] on a mg/m² basis. There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Ramelteon should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

The effects of ramelteon on embryo-fetal development were assessed in both the rat and rabbit. Pregnant rats were administered ramelteon by oral gavage at doses of 0, 10, 40, 150, or 600 mg/kg/day during gestation days 6–17, which is the period of organogenesis in this species. Evidence of maternal toxicity and fetal teratogenicity was observed at doses greater than or equal to 150 mg/kg/day. Maternal toxicity was chiefly characterized by decreased body weight and, at 600 mg/kg/day, ataxia and decreased spontaneous movement. At maternally toxic doses (150 mg/kg/day or greater), the fetuses demonstrated visceral malformations consisting of diaphragmatic hernia and minor anatomical variations of the skeleton (irregularly shaped scapula). At 600 mg/kg/day, reductions in fetal body weights and malformations including cysts on the external genitalia were additionally observed. The no-effect level for teratogenicity in this study was 40 mg/kg/day (1,892-times and 45-times higher than the therapeutic exposure to ramelteon and the active metabolite M-II, respectively, at the MRHD based on an area under the concentration-time curve [AUC] comparison). Pregnant rabbits were administered ramelteon by oral gavage at doses of 0, 12, 60, or 300 mg/kg/day during gestation days 6–18, which is the period of organogenesis in this species. Although maternal toxicity was apparent with a ramelteon dose of 300 mg/kg/day, no evidence of fetal effects or teratogenicity was associated with any dose level. The no-effect level for teratogenicity was, therefore, 300 mg/kg/day (11,862-times and 99-times higher than the therapeutic exposure to ramelteon and M-II, respectively, at the MRHD based on the AUC).

The effects of ramelteon on pre- and post-natal development in the rat were studied by administration of ramelteon to the pregnant rat by oral gavage at doses of 0, 30, 100, or 300 mg/kg/day from day 6 of gestation through parturition to postnatal (lactation) day 21, at which time offspring were weaned. Maternal toxicity was noted at doses of 100 mg/kg/day or greater and consisted of reduced body weight gain and increased adrenal gland weight. Reduced body weight during the post-weaning period was also noticed in the offspring of the groups given 100 mg/kg/day and higher. Offspring in the 300 mg/kg/day group demonstrated physical and developmental delays including delayed eruption of the lower incisors, a delayed acquisition of the righting reflex, and an alteration of emotional response. These delays are often observed in the presence of reduced offspring body weight but may still be indicative of developmental delay. An apparent decrease in the viability of offspring in the 300 mg/kg/day group was likely due to altered maternal behavior and function observed at this dose level. Offspring of the 300 mg/kg/day group also showed evidence of diaphragmatic hernia, a finding observed in the embryo-fetal development study previously described. There were no effects on the reproductive capacity of offspring and the resulting progeny were not different from those of vehicle-treated offspring. The no-effect level for pre- and post-natal development in this study was 30 mg/kg/day (39-times higher than the MRHD on a mg/m² basis).

Labor and Delivery

The potential effects of ROZEREM on the duration of labor and/or delivery, for either the mother or the fetus, have not been studied. ROZEREM has no established use in labor and delivery.

Nursing Mothers

Ramelteon is secreted into the milk of lactating rats. It is not known whether this drug is excreted

in human milk. No clinical studies in nursing mothers have been performed. The use of ROZEREM in nursing mothers is not recommended.

Pediatric Use

Safety and effectiveness of ROZEREM in pediatric patients have not been established. Further study is needed prior to determining that this product may be used safely in pre-pubescent and pubescent patients.

Geriatric Use

A total of 654 subjects in double-blind, placebo-controlled, efficacy trials who received ROZEREM were at least 65 years of age; of these, 199 were 75 years of age or older. No overall differences in safety or efficacy were observed between elderly and younger adult subjects.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

Overview

The data described in this section reflect exposure to ROZEREM in 4251 subjects, including 346 exposed for 6 months or longer, and 473 subjects for one year.

Adverse Reactions Resulting in Discontinuation of Treatment

Six percent of the 3594 individual subjects exposed to ROZEREM in clinical studies discontinued treatment owing to an adverse event, compared with the 2% of the 1370 subjects receiving placebo. The most frequent adverse events leading to discontinuation in subjects receiving ROZEREM were somnolence (0.8%), dizziness (0.5%), nausea (0.3%), fatigue (0.3%), headache (0.3%), and insomnia (0.3%).

ROZEREM Most Commonly Observed Adverse Events in Phase 1-3 trials

The incidence of adverse events during the Phase 1 through 3 trials (% placebo, n=1370; % ramelteon 8 mg, n=1250) were: headache NOS (7%, 7%), somnolence (3%, 5%), fatigue (2%, 4%), dizziness (3%, 5%), nausea (2%, 3%), insomnia exacerbated (2%, 3%), upper respiratory tract infection NOS (2%, 3%), diarrhea NOS (2%, 2%), myalgia (1%, 2%), depression (1%, 2%), dysgeusia (1%, 2%), arthralgia (1%, 2%), influenza (0, 1%), blood cortisol decreased (0, 1%).

Because clinical trials are conducted under widely varying conditions, adverse reaction rates observed in the clinical trials of a drug cannot be directly compared to rates in clinical trials of other drugs, and may not reflect the rates observed in practice. The adverse reaction information from clinical trials does, however, provide a basis for identifying the adverse events that appear to be related to drug use and for approximating rates.

DRUG ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE

ROZEREM is not a controlled substance.

Human Data: See the CLINICAL TRIALS section, Studies Pertinent to Safety Concerns for Sleep-Promoting Agents, in the Complete Prescribing Information.

Animal Data: Ramelteon did not produce any signals from animal behavioral studies indicating that the drug produces rewarding effects. Monkeys did not self-administer ramelteon and the drug did not induce a conditioned place preference in rats. There was no generalization between ramelteon and midazolam. Ramelteon did not affect rotord performance, an indicator of disruption of motor function, and it did not potentiate the ability of diazepam to interfere with rotord performance. Discontinuation of ramelteon in animals or in humans after chronic administration did not produce withdrawal signs. Ramelteon does not appear to produce physical dependence.

OVERDOSAGE

Signs and Symptoms

No cases of ROZEREM overdose have been reported during clinical development.

ROZEREM was administered in single doses up to 160 mg in an abuse liability trial. No safety or tolerability concerns were seen.

Recommended Treatment

General symptomatic and supportive measures should be used, along with immediate gastric lavage where appropriate. Intravenous fluids should be administered as needed. As in all cases of drug overdose, respiration, pulse, blood pressure, and other appropriate vital signs should be monitored, and general supportive measures employed.

Hemodialysis does not effectively reduce exposure to ROZEREM. Therefore, the use of dialysis in the treatment of overdosage is not appropriate.

Poison Control Center

As with the management of all overdosage, the possibility of multiple drug ingestion should be considered. The physician may contact a poison control center for current information on the management of overdosage.

Rx only

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We've got your back

Prevent painful kinks with these tips and stretches.

Dashing through the snow laden with shopping bags. Hanging off the ladder to put up the mistletoe. Lifting the suitcase into the car. No wonder your back hurts.

Aches and pains that pop up over the holidays are no surprise to Charles Rosen, MD, an orthopedic spine surgeon at the University of California, Irvine, Medical Center, who says he sees a pattern of injuries every December. "One bad twist, stretch, or bend can cause pressure to build up inside the spinal disks in your spine, leading to a tear," he says.

Avoid holiday strains with Rosen's tips (below) and stay limber with our stretches for the season (at right).

Carry on. When totting bags, **distribute the weight evenly**, so you're not hoisting your giant Kate Spade purse, gym duffel, and shopping bags all on the same side.

5,800
The number of fall-related injuries that happen while decorating for the holidays each year.*

Climb right. Using a ladder? Move it in as close to the tree as possible and never stand on the top rung or climb with both hands full. If you're holding something heavy, be sure you have a spotter. And don't reach too far. A good rule of thumb: Don't let your hips extend past the sides of the ladder.

Lift smart. When moving packages, bring the box in close while lifting or lowering, turn your whole body (not just at the waist), and use your legs.



De-stress. Staying calm and cool is good for your back health as well as your general well-being, Rosen says. "Studies show that emotional tension can translate to a physically robotlike state that prevents you from moving easily or fluidly. And that stiffness makes it easier for people to get into awkward positions that can cause them to stress their backs. This is a vicious cycle because once you have back pain, you're even more stressed!"



My father died two years ago, and now the holidays are always hard. How can I get through this time of year?

"When someone we love dies, we miss them daily," says Terese Vorsheck, director of Highmark Caring Place, a grieving center in Pennsylvania. But we're even sadder around the holidays when we're also reminiscing about the person, so beforehand discuss with your family what traditions you want to keep or change and how you want to include the family member who is gone. Allowing memories to be shared in a natural way keeps the person who died a part of these special days and can be comforting as long as you don't dwell upon them. As the holiday arrives, be gentle with yourself, Vorsheck says. "If you just can't do it, whatever it is—baking cookies, visiting friends, decorating your house—don't." Because you've talked about your feelings, you won't feel as if you have to suppress your emotions for fear of dampening the holiday spirit. As time passes, she adds, you'll find you can be sad and still enjoy these days.

Stay limber this season

Elisabeth Halfpapp, co-creator of Exhale Apa's Core Fusion and Core Energy Flow class, suggests these moves to keep your back holiday-ready.



Curl Abdominal Strengthener and Back Stretch

Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat, and arms by your sides. Keeping your lower back on the floor, tuck your tailbone and curl your shoulder blades up, keeping your gaze forward and chin parallel to the floor. At the same time, reach with hands outside your knees. Hold 30 seconds. Lower your body and arms, and rest 30 seconds. Do 3 reps.



Prone Back Strengthener

Lie on your tummy with arms bent and forehead resting on forearms. With abs flexed and hips pressed into the floor, lift your right leg and do 20 small lifts, moving leg a few inches up and down without touching the floor. Repeat with the left leg. Next, keeping your legs slightly apart, repeat with both legs at once. Hold the last lift for 20 seconds.



Spine and Back-Muscle Stretch

Sit with abs tight, back straight, and legs bent; cross right over left, and place right foot on floor outside left knee. Twist torso to the right and place left elbow against the outside of your right knee. Place your right hand behind you for support. Look over your right shoulder. Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat on opposite side to complete the set. Do 3 sets.

5 ways to curb your cravings

No one likes to party more than The Nutrition Twins—Lyssie Lakatos, RD, and Tammy Lakatos Shames, RD. That's why we turned to them for these smart ways to avoid overeating while celebrating.



1 Never leave home hungry.

That old rule really does help reduce grazing overload, especially if you load up on something yummy and filling preparty. Our pick: **heart-healthy oatmeal**. A 100-calorie packet will warm your tummy, release some serotonin to help you relax, and fill you up enough to help you make good eating decisions when you're about to face the buffet.

2 Ditch the craving. Wrap a few gifts or trim the tree to take your mind off your tummy. Your hunger pangs should subside in about 10 minutes. If they don't, make some cinnamon-popcorn strings for the tree and help yourself to a few kernels while you decorate. It will take quite a while for the calories to add up (six cups of air-popped popcorn is 186 calories).

3 Be the life of the party.

Collect new friends instead of appetizers. Fill your small plate once, nibble a little, and mingle.



4 Bring a low-cal treat.

Surprise the hostess with a sugar-free, lime-and-strawberry Jell-O mold topped with fat-free whipped cream; a half-cup serving is less than 20 calories.



5 Substitute smartly.

Want to curb a chocolate craving? **Dip strawberries in sugar-free chocolate**. Need to satisfy your urge for high-cal pumpkin pie? Add a few packets of Splenda to a half-cup of canned pumpkin; it delivers just 40 calories—but 300 percent of your daily vitamin A and 3.6 grams of fiber. For a little crunch, spread some on a graham cracker.

Pay for
\$1,000
in gifts ...

...With a credit card
You'll spend \$400 in interest if you pay it off in a year; \$50 in interest if you pay it off by March.

...With a debit card or cash
You'll save enough money to buy a month's worth of groceries or get a gym membership.

Stressed about cash? Try this

What's your main source of holiday stress? Finances, according to 55 percent of respondents to a Family Credit Counseling Service Survey. That's because women tend to think "bigger is better," which leads to overspending, says Jennifer Openshaw, author of *The Millionaire Zone: Seven Winning Steps to a Seven-Figure Fortune*. It's better to buy a small gift that really speaks to the recipient than something expensive. And by cutting out a few daily expenses, you might just be able to save enough for some meaningful gifts. Bills.com helped us come up with this chart to show you the way.

SKIP THIS ...	=	SAVE THIS ...	=	BUY THIS!
12 lattes	= \$45 =	pedicure for Mom		
8 lunches out (at \$7 each)	= \$56 =	personal-training session for your sister		
3 CDs	= \$50 =	one-year subscription to <i>Sports Illustrated</i> for Dad		
1 dinner-and-a-movie date	= \$90 =	new gym bag for your sweetie		
4 extras at Target (wastebasket, pair of sweats, bag of chips, and a new nail polish)	= \$50 =	half-hour golf lesson for your brother		
2 manicures	= \$30 =	funky pair of Keds for your niece		



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