



MEDICAL MUTUAL

CAROLINA CARE PLAN | CONSUMERS LIFE



e-newsletter

December 2011

Log In To My Health Plan

Quick Links

- [Symptom Checker](#)
- [Virtual Health Guides](#)
- [Health Resource Center](#)
- [Account Details](#)

Log in to My Health Plan ▶

Ensuring a SAFE and HAPPY Holiday Season

The holiday season is a happy and fun time, but without careful attention, it can also be a dangerous time. According to the National Fire Protection Association, holiday trees and electric decorations account for 390 home fires annually and more than \$25.2 million in property damage. These safety tips will ensure your holidays stay merry, bright and safe:

- When buying a live tree, look at the needles. If they are brown or break easily, choose another tree. Test for freshness by bending a few needles in half. If the needles snap in two, the tree is dry, look for a tree with needles that spring back to their original shape. Keep your tree at least three feet away from any heat source or flames such as candles and fireplaces. Add water daily to keep your tree from drying out too fast.
- Make sure your light strands are not frayed, cracked or damaged. Only use lights with a safety certification label and do not overload electrical outlets by linking more than three light strands together unless the directions indicate it is safe. Replace lights when they are cracked or the wire is frayed. Holiday lights should be replaced about every 3 years. Look for the UL label on the box so you know the lights have been tested for safety.
- Only use non-flammable or flame-retardant decorations. Hang them away from heat sources, including vents.
- Turn off the lights when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors



Holiday Relief for Your Feet

Sore feet from holiday shopping? Kneading your feet with a tennis ball can help alleviate cramps and sore arches. Just place the ball on the ground in front of you, put one foot on top of the ball and gently roll it from toe to heel and repeat.

Careful Cocktails and Fearless Finger Foods

Festive dinners, office parties and other holiday gatherings make this the season of indulgence. To keep your calories in check, stick to these party basics:

Appetizers: Lean protein is the gold standard of party food because it fills you up

in your home. Test them regularly and replace the batteries twice a year. Make sure your home has working smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.

Sources:

[NFPA - Home Christmas Tree and Holiday Light Fires](#)

[Home Safety Council - Trim the Tree Safely](#)



Fighting the Winter Blahs

As the days grow darker, does your mood grow dark, too? Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is brought on by winter's shorter days and harsh weather. Health experts believe the main cause is the lack of daylight and sun exposure.

The symptoms of SAD usually appear around the same time every year and tend to go away when spring arrives. Common symptoms include weight gain, fatigue, irritability and loss of interest in things you usually enjoy. While you can't stop the days from being dark or cold, you can fend off SAD with these easy tips:

- Make your home as bright as possible by opening blinds or curtains
- Get outdoors whenever the sun comes out, even for a few minutes
- Exercise regularly. Exercise boosts natural brain chemicals that help lift your mood
- Get enough sleep, eat a balanced diet and avoid depressants like alcohol
- Socialize with people you enjoy. "Cabin fever" can make symptoms worse

without many calories. Try shrimp with cocktail sauce or meat skewers.

Drink: Stick with red wine in moderation. It has fewer calories than a martini or eggnog and the antioxidants it contains may have heart-healthy benefits.

Side Dishes: Scan a dinner buffet for vegetables. Roasted, steamed or lightly glazed varieties are perfect.

Desserts: Steer clear of soufflés, cheesecakes and other richly dense desserts.