


**Family Living**  
**Focus**  
 by  
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**Healthy Practices For The Holiday Season Get Outside For Some Fresh Air And Exercise**

"There's no such thing as bad weather, only inadequate clothing" that's what they say in Sweden. They take their children outside to play summer and winter — even in subzero temperatures — and the children are healthier for it!

Children need fresh air and vigorous exercise every day. They can't get either one if they stay inside all day. Most of us keep our homes tightly closed during the winter months to save on energy costs, and the air inside becomes stale. Getting outside for some fresh air renews vigor, clears the brain, and helps children function better.

Exercise has the same effect as the blood reaches our brains more quickly and clears the system. Children eat better, sleep

better, and think better when they get adequate fresh air and exercise. Children don't get sick from being outside in cold weather — they get healthy. The illness comes from viruses and bacteria, which are spread much more easily when children are inside all day in close contact with one another.

One of these days, when it's cold or rainy and you're cooped up at home, check it out for yourself. Put on whatever you need to keep warm and dry and go outside and take a walk. I guarantee you'll feel better afterwards.

**Be Cautious In Decorating Your Home With Holiday Plants**

They can provide a festive atmosphere but many plants are also a danger to curious children and pets that may nibble upon them. Refer to the following list of poisonous greens when decorating spaced that are accessible

and highly utilized by children and pets:

- Holly — the leaves are very toxic and eating 20 percent to 30 percent of the berries can be fatal to a small child.

- Ivy — can cause diarrhea, convulsions, and in some cases, cause death when eaten in large quantities.

- Mistletoe — leaves and berries, when eaten may cause a drop in blood pressure, plus a slow down in the heartbeat.

- Christmas Rose — has a white flower which can cause nausea, diarrhea and a slow or weak heartbeat when eaten.

- Jerusalem Cherry — with its small cherry tomato — like berries, can cause a slowing of the heart rate accompanied by a fall in blood pressure.

- Yew — generally grows outside but it is often brought inside for a decorative trim; has fatal berries and leaves when eaten by people and animals.

- Poinsettia — has a poisonous reputation, but it is one of the least toxic holiday plants.

If you think your child has eaten a poisonous plant, and you perceive it to be a life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately. In other cases, call your family physician or the Central PA Poison Control Center@ 1-800-521-6110. The Poison Control Center is staffed 24

hours a day, 365 days a year. The center will also respond to inquires about poisoned pets if you cannot reach your local veterinarian.

In either case, should you decide to go to an appropriate medical facility for help. Bring a sample of the plant with you.

**Adjust Your Expectations And Concentrate On Enjoyable "Moments"**

Every year we get so excited about our upcoming holidays, but somehow it never quite lives up to our great expectations. The cookies didn't get baked, the flight was delayed or cancelled, the kids squabbled over the gifts, and old grievances got reshaped.

Rather than struggling endlessly to achieve a "perfect" holiday celebration, why not modify your mental picture to more closely resemble the way it really is? Without sacrificing the spirit of the season, try to get rid of some of the excess by simplifying your plans. Get rid of the busyness and clear the way for more relaxing time to be together with family and friends. For example, instead of worrying about the cookies you didn't get baked, how about taking the kids to the bakery and letting them pick out their own favorites?

Replace disappointments with a sense of humor. Don't obsess about the off-kilter tree or the

things that don't go right. Have a good laugh about it and embrace the season as your own unique and special celebration; it may not be "perfect" but then neither are we.

Another tip is to negotiate outside commitments. The kids are coming home from college and want to catch up on sleep after exams, and then to race around seeing their local friends. You want to spend time with them and also to have them join you on visits to or with the extended family. Before they arrive home, strike a compromise about how many days and which days they'll be guaranteed undisturbed time — whether for sleeping or visiting with their friends. In exchange, they agree to cooperatively accompany you on a specified number of outside visits and to spend a specific amount of quiet time with "just the family."

Most important of all, we need to remind ourselves to "love the ones we're with" — to paraphrase a favorite old song. Whatever the state of our holiday plans and festivities, we need to find the peace and joy in the moment, just as it is. Despite burnt dinners, broken toys, and the squabbles that are a part of life with children and an extended family, embrace the day and those who share it with you.

# Butterball Turkey Talk-Line

The Butterball Turkey Talk-Line is the source for reliable turkey information. This season, Butterball is offering a free instant-read meat thermometer to

every caller. Forty-eight professionally trained home economists and nutritionists will provide holiday cooks with solutions to virtually every turkey prepara-

tion by calling 800-323-4848 (English and Spanish); 800-TDD-3848 (hearing- and speech-impaired assistance); www.butterball.com; online as-

sistance and e-mail, Nov.-Dec. 22.

Dates and hours are Nov. 1-22, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. (ET), weekdays; Nov. 18-19, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

(ET), weekend prior to Thanksgiving; Nov. 23, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. (ET), Thanksgiving Day; Nov. 24-Dec. 22, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. (ET), weekdays.

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