University of Richmond Employee Well-being

Happy Holidays: During a Pandemic

Like most events, activities and celebrations this year, the 2020 holidays are likely to be far different than your past Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa celebrations. Not only are we in the midst of a pandemic — severely limiting our ability to gather, and negatively affecting the health and finances of many — but COVID-19 infections continue to grow and the flu season is soon to take off.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the country is experiencing a resurgence of COVID-19 infections. Small, household gatherings are being named as one of the primary causes, and experts warn the increase in cases will continue as temperatures drop, people spend more time indoors and the holiday season approaches.

Creating meaningful experiences, even during disappointment. “It is important to accept reality as it is and sit with the uncomfortable and potentially distressing thoughts and feelings,” Kim Eisenberg, LCSW, says. “Once we’re able to do that, then we can simultaneously start to look at the ways we can still find meaning, purpose, joy and connection. The acceptance of a disappointing reality and having a meaningful and fulfilling life experience are not mutually exclusive.”

Eisenberg suggests you start to think about what might actually be tangible and realistic ways to have meaningful experiences this year, even though they’re likely going to be completely different from anything previously experienced. Whether that’s scheduling a Zoom family call or volunteering, it’s about working within the constraints of the situation.

Setting guidelines for gatherings with compassion. Eisenberg offers the following tips:

Don’t assume that everyone’s going to be on the same page in terms of behaving the same way and adhering to the same norms. Be in touch with your own values — identify the areas in which you have some flexibility and the things that you’re not going to compromise on in order to stay true to yourself. Empathize with your loved ones who have differing perspectives, and try to see the underlying values and emotions that are driving their decisions.

Making future plans can make everyone feel better. While coping with the disappointment about this year’s holiday season can be a challenge, Eisenberg says that looking forward to next year might help. While no one can guarantee what the future holds, medical experts such as Dr. Anthony Fauci share that proven COVID-19 treatments, successful public health measures and a positive outlook for a potential vaccine should provide some hope.

“While we need to accept the reality that the world is never going to go back to exactly how it was for us pre-pandemic, it is going to continue to get better and we’re going to continue to adapt and be resilient together,” Eisenberg says. “We can allow ourselves to feel hope about the future, look forward to more relaxed times, and start to plan for future holidays, trips, and the tangible milestones and goalposts we want to reach.”

Source: Sharp
Yo U R Compliance Connection with Kris Henderson, Director of Compliance and Title IX Coordinator — National Ethics and Compliance Week

Thanks to everyone who participated in UR’s third annual observance of National Ethics and Compliance Week. The week featured games, compliance information as well as an online scavenger hunt. Our observance might have looked a bit different than in year’s past, but our focus remained on the importance of compliance in our work decisions.

The contest winners from the week were Professor Pippa Holloway and Ingrid Lasrado.

Congratulations!

Healthy Cooking: Healthy Monster Cookies

Ingredients:
1 cup natural peanut butter (just peanuts and salt)
2 tbsp. melted butter or coconut oil
2/3 cup brown sugar or coconut sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 cup rolled oats
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 cup M&Ms
1/4 cup dark chocolate chips
1/4 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
1/4 cup shredded coconut

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the wet ingredients: peanut butter, melted butter, brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla extract.
3. Next stir in oats, baking soda, and cinnamon until well combined. Gently fold in 1/4 cup M&Ms, chocolate chips, walnuts, and coconut.
4. Use a cookie scoop to scoop dough into balls, and place them on the prepared cookie sheet, leaving about 2 inches between each cookie. With the remaining 1/4 cup of M&Ms, press a few M&Ms on the top of each cookie.
5. Bake 10-13 minutes until edges are golden brown. Allow cookies to cool 5-10 minutes on the cookie sheet before moving to a wire rack. Enjoy!
Educational Corner: Tips to Stay Healthy in Winter

Staying healthy is likely at the top of your list almost every winter. But this year, in the midst of a pandemic, it may be even more of a concern than usual. You might wonder: should you be taking special supplements to boost your immune system, or investing in cleaning devices to zap germs?

While the viral threats may be different from usual this year, the truth is that you should still be using many of the same strategies that you use in a typical year, says Michael Starnbach, a professor of microbiology at Harvard Medical School. Below are five of his top tips that can help you keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

1. **Clean your hands.** Practicing good hand hygiene isn't fancy or novel, but it works, says Starnbach. Washing with simple soap and water, and using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available, can help keep you from transporting germs from an infected surface to your eyes, nose, or mouth. Also, be sure to follow local and state recommendations, which may include additional strategies such as wearing a mask and avoiding large gatherings, particularly indoors.

2. **Eat healthy and exercise.** Prime your immune system to effectively fight disease by keeping your body healthy. Follow a nutrient-rich diet that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Also, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. "Being in good health helps us to resist infectious diseases," says Starnbach.

3. **Don't skip doctor visits.** Some people may fear getting exposed to illness, so they decide to avoid routine screenings and doctor's appointments. But they may be putting themselves at higher risk by doing so, says Starnbach. "Doctors' offices are now equipped for routine visits in a coordinated and safe manner," he says. Whether you show up in person or visit via video, it's important to check in periodically with your doctor. Screenings are important for maintaining overall health and catching potential problems early, when they are most treatable.

4. **Get vaccinated.** Vaccinations aren't only for kids; they're a proven means of boosting your immune system to protect against certain viruses and other infectious agents. Although COVID-19 has taken center stage recently, don't forget about traditional threats, such as the flu. Getting your annual flu shot is essential this year. Adults should also make certain that they are up to date on their tetanus shot, which should be given every 10 years, and consider getting the newer shingles vaccine, called Shingrix, which is recommended to everyone over age 50. It's designed to prevent the virus that causes chickenpox (which remains in the body even after the infection has cleared) from reactivating and causing the painful shingles rash and other symptoms. Adults over age 65 may also want to consider the pneumococcal vaccine to protect against a type of pneumonia unrelated to COVID-19. And stay tuned for news about a vaccine that could protect against COVID-19, which Starnbach says he hopes may become available in the not-so-distant future.

5. **Be skeptical.** A host of products on the market claim to protect you from germs — "self-cleaning" surfaces, ultraviolet (UV) lights, and even substances you're supposed to ingest, says Starnbach. Many of these items have some scientific basis, but it's often a big leap from that basic science to the final product, he says. For example, one type of "self-cleaning" surface claims to use crystals to kill germs. While those crystals might indeed kill germs in a laboratory, it's not at all clear that they work the same way to kill germs in a real-life setting, says Starnbach. So, there is much room for skepticism. Ultimately, the best way to keep your environment germ-free is to wipe surfaces clean and then disinfect to deactivate any virus. You don't need any special devices, just a rag and some generic cleaning products.

Source: Harvard Health
Americans gain about 1-2 pounds during the holidays. While this doesn’t seem to be a lot, research shows that it adds up over the years. Below are some tips on how to stay healthy over the Holidays.

1. **Don’t skip meals**
   Skipping meals leading up to a party or gathering may result in overeating. Include lots of fiber in meals leading up to the party by eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains to increase satiety but are also lower in calories.

2. **Eat small portions**
   Holiday meals and parties tend to have a lot of food. Survey the buffet table or appetizers prior to putting anything on your plate. Choose the foods that look appealing to you but get smaller portions of them so you can taste a variety of foods. However, don’t forget to fill your plates with fruit and vegetables too. You should aim for ⅓ of your plate fruits and vegetables, ¼ plate protein and ⅓ plate carbohydrates.

3. **Strategies to avoid overeating**
   Use a smaller plate which encourages proper portion sizes. Also, start filling your plate with vegetables and salad before going to the entrees, sides and desserts. Eat slowly and savor every bite, and before you go back for seconds, wait 10 minutes to see if you are really still hungry.

4. **Keep moving**
   After dinner, go for a walk to get some physical activity. This is a great time to catch up with family members. Other ideas are to play catch or play a game of basketball with the kids.