

Merry Christmas
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Christmas Care

The majesty of Christmas is nearly upon us again. It affects the young of all ages. Anticipation runs wild in children's eyes. The season starts with frost, barren trees, and the arrival of the first Christmas cards in the mailbox. This season, to me, is all about loving and appreciating our family and friends, fun, food, fellowship, forgiveness, renewal, and of course an overabundance of chocolate. The Children's Pediatric Center wishes to share here our tips for a happy.healthy.® Christmas.

Sing Out Loud

With Jack Frost nipping at the nose we tend to do less healthy outdoor exercise. This will also help with the "cabin fever" that has the little ones climbing the walls. At the Anderson home we bundle up in warm clothes and walk around our neighborhood to

admire the Christmas light displays. Better yet, walk the dog too. Put sleigh bells on old Rover and make off like he is a miniature reindeer. If you can sing, try some caroling at a house or two. When you exercise or sing your body releases endorphins, making you happy and healthy with reduced food cravings.

Rest and Renewal

The immune system is always given a boost when there is enough sleep to feed it. With all the great TV shows and parties around Christmas, the temptation is to let everyone stay up later and party. The fact is, lack of sleep will cause more health problems, increase tempers and overload the body's ability to ward off winter colds.

Eat Responsibly

Chips, nuts, M&Ms, cookies, pretzels, candies, cake, soda, CHOCOLATE! Yum. All this and we still have Halloween

candy. One good way to limit what our little ones eat is to hide it in the cupboard. If candy out and visible, it will get eaten more readily. So find a good hiding spot! Try some of the snacks with fewer calories, and avoid too much snacking between meals. Don't let them overeat. They're watching you. Mind your example as you yearn for that 3rd helping of Christmas pie.

Healthy Hydration

Coffees, soda, and alcohol trigger the body to waste water with dilute urine. When the body dehydrates, concentration levels decrease, appetite increases, and exhaustion sets in. You'll see some of these signs in your children very quickly so keep them watered. Also healthy hydration will curb the appetite.

Remember the Reason for the Season

Take some time, when the

whole family is present, the TV is off, when the presents are not a distraction, and grab the family Bible. Start a tradition. Read aloud as a family the second chapter of Luke with a crackling fire. Luke's details will provide a history lesson and reason for Christmas. Times like these will lodge in their minds for rest of their lives. Strengthen relationships, and strengthen security and solidarity in the family - creating a happy.healthy.® home.