

## Health, the best holiday gift

The best gift you can give yourself and to others for the holidays is the gift of health. As the temperatures drop and holiday related stress creeps in, one is prone to flu like illnesses, weight gain, gastrointestinal illnesses and injury.

Annual epidemics of influenza occur during the winter months in Houston. Pneumonia and influenza is the 7th leading cause of death in the United States. Aside from the flu vaccine, the best protection is hand washing. Antiviral drugs help reduce the severity of influenza. Stay at home when sick and avoid contact with others. Get plenty of rest, fluids and take multivitamins. Manage stress levels. Learn to say no to extra commitments.

Holiday parties abound. Keep an eye on your food intake especially on the desserts. Uncontrolled hyperglycemia may lead to diabetes. Eat in moderation. Sixty four percent of adults age 20 years and over are overweight and obese.

A trick on taking salad dressing is the fork method. Dip the fork in the salad dressing that's been set aside before taking in a bite of salad. Balance food intake with exercise or physical activity. Hit the gym, clean the house or walk in the mall in between shopping.

Stay warm. As one grows older, the ability to feel the drop in temperatures decreases. Have a thermometer outside to read temperatures or listen to the radio for weather reports as a clothing guide. Hypothermia affects the elderly more but may affect any age group that is unnecessarily exposed to outside cold weather. An easy to read indoor thermometer is helpful too.

Travel safely. Avoid alcohol. According to the National Center for Statistics, 17,013 people in the U.S. died in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, representing 40 percent of all traffic-related deaths in 2003. For more information regarding health statistics, visit [www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs).



## Professional development news

The Public Works and Engineering Safety Section is offering **CPR/Medic First Aid/AED classes** in January, February and March, 2006. Classes in English are January 3 and 17, February 7 and 21, and March 7 and 21, 2006. A CPR/Medic First Aid/AED class will be offered in Spanish on January 12, 2006. If you have employees whose primary language is Spanish, please register them for this class. -- The PWE Safety Section is offering **Defensive Driving classes** from January - March, 2006. January 4, 11, 18, and 25 (English) February 1, 8, 15, and 22 (English) March 1, 8, 15, and 22 (English) A Defensive Driving course will be offered in Spanish on February 9, 2005. **The classes will be held at the E B Cape Center.** Register through your training liaison with supervisory approval. For more information contact Rafael Hernandez at 713-558-2416 or at [Rafael.hernandez@cityofhouston.net](mailto:Rafael.hernandez@cityofhouston.net). Happy Holidays from the training section.

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