

# Managing stress and money at Christmas



The festive season can be fun – buying presents, going to parties, seeing friends and family – but there’s no doubt it can be challenging too. Over-indulging, family pressures and high expectations of the ‘perfect Christmas’ can leave us all feeling a little jaded.

Your Health Matters Assistance Programme (HMAP) can provide free, practical information and support on a range of issues to help you get through the festive season:

- Surviving work parties and social events
- Budgeting and avoiding over-spending
- Consumer issues
- Enjoying family get-togethers
- Looking after your health and well-being
- Coping with loneliness, or loss of a loved one
- And more...

### Our top 5 Christmas Tips

#### 1. Prepare, Plan ahead, be organised

Start making a list of things you need to do for Christmas early, shopping, food and presents, decorations, seating plans, travel arrangements. Make the list as detailed as possible, include people’s phone numbers or email addresses to make contacting them simpler. Try to prioritise the items on your list: can they be done now, and are they essential? Delegate the responsibility for certain tasks to other family members since this will reduce your workload. Keep your list for next year; it’ll need tweaking and updating but will give you reminders the sorts of things you need to think about.

#### 2. Set a budget...and stick to it

Presents don’t have to be expensive to show someone that you love them. It really is the thought that counts. It is much nicer for someone to spend a few minutes thinking about you, rather than simply going to the nearest shop and just buying something.

#### 3. Stop trying to create perfection

Perfection is in the eye of the beholder, so we will all have different opinions about what constitutes perfection. So on that basis it is almost impossible for anything to be perfect for everybody. Somebody will always be disappointed. The key to this tip is about letting things go. Don’t sweat about the little things.

#### 4. Shopping

Although shopping locally has many advantages High Street shopping just before Christmas can be particularly stressful. Where possible do your shopping online in front of the T.V with a cup of tea in hand and avoid the busy shops and cold weather.

#### 5. Know when to stop

Decide when you will stop your Christmas preparations and start to relax and enjoy the holiday. Work towards and try to stick to this goal, even if it is in the late afternoon on Christmas Eve. Remember that Christmas is your holiday too.



Your HMAP is available to support you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A confidential\* counselling and information service on hand when you need it.

Call us on Freephone 0800 988 8809

[www.hmap-hub.co.uk](http://www.hmap-hub.co.uk)