

Avoiding stress, anxiety this holiday season

By CADY JONES - PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 27, 2017

Although for most of us the holidays are the “most wonderful time of the year,” just like the song says, it’s also the most stressful time of the year. There are Christmas plays to go to, gifts to wrap, concerts and events to buy tickets for, potlucks and parties for which to cook food, decorations to put up and a million other things that threaten to steal the joy from the holiday season.

In addition to the stress caused by all these extra requirements, the season itself can affect your mood. Seasonal affective disorder is, simply, the state of feeling down and out because of less sunlight and more darkness during the winter and early spring.

To help combat the stress and anxiety brought on by the shorter days and heightened activity lists, it’s more important than ever to treat your body right during the holiday season, according to Ed Jones, co-owner of Nutrition World.

“The hectic pace of the holidays seems contagious for most of us, but it’s important to not take on so many activities that you neglect your eating and exercising regimens,” Jones said. “For instance, the holidays can be so busy that folks miss meals or overconsume carbohydrates because of their ease and convenience, and both of these can cause a skyrocket in stress.”

Also important is making time to keep your mental health in check. As the holidays are a time when families are supposed to be together, sadness and despair are common for folks who have lost loved ones or who have family dynamics that are less than ideal.

Jones recommends doing what is best for you, whether it’s a massage, an acupuncture session or seeing a counselor, to help keep these anxious feelings in check.

“Although it’s the busiest time of year, it’s important to carve out time for the things our bodies need more now than at any other time,” he said.

Natural supplements can also help your mental health. Anxiocalm, theanine and CBD are all safe, calming options that can calm the mind when your mental voices become too much to bear. Most nutritional intervention focuses on reducing the spiking of cortisol, the stress hormone, as well as supports the adrenals—the key organ for stress management.

Calming the mind will also lead to better sleep, which is especially important during this stressful time of year. Overcoming insomnia is a key to good body chemistry, which in turn is key to keeping the mind from wandering into fears and worries.

“The more robust and healthy our bodies, the more resilient we are to our emotions,” Jones said. “Mental and physical health are linked far more than many realize.”

Cady Jones is co-owner of Nutrition World, which opened in 1979 with the priority of offering Chattanooga’s best selection of health products that meet high standards for quality.