

Chambers County

# FCS NEWSLETTER

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## SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

### 5 Tips for a Smart Holiday Season

Do you go crazy during the holiday season, spending thousands of dollars on gifts for every niece, nephew, great uncle and third cousin? Do you decorate your house and buy enough holiday food to feed an army? If so, you are not alone. Many Americans feel the sting of their holiday spending well into the following year.

If you love the holidays but hate the financial pinch you feel afterward, following these tips can help you celebrate and give without breaking the bank.

**1. Know your limit.** Take the time to sit down and plan out your holiday spending budget before you hit the malls and grocery stores. Gifts, both large and small, can really take a toll on your bank account.

**2. Plan ahead.** You've done your budget and you're ready to tackle the crowds but doing a little more preparation can help you save even more money—both online and in stores. Looking for special savings and coupons, taking advantage of free shipping from online retailers and buying gifts throughout the year instead of just in November and December can help you reduce the financial burden.

**3. Trim your list.** It may sound harsh but you probably don't need to exchange gifts with everyone on your list. Giving group gifts (i.e. gifts for the home of family friends instead of individual gifts) or just not giving to certain family members who aren't close is a great way to cut back on spending.

**4. Cut back on stress.** The holidays can be very stressful time. Planning ahead making a list of who you will buy for can cut back on stress and last minute spending that will affect your costs.

**5. Remember what the holiday season was about.** In the end the holidays are about spending time with your loved ones. Staying focused on that and enjoying the memories made with friends and family can help keep stress in perspective.

Article adapted from "Holiday Spending Survival Guide" on [PracticalMoneySkills.com](http://PracticalMoneySkills.com).

# A Safe Holiday Feast

1 in 6 AMERICANS WILL GET A  
FOODBORNE ILLNESS THIS YEAR.

**FOOD SAFETY is IMPORTANT!**

Follow these simple rules to ensure a **SAFE** holiday feast.

## SHOPPING for your FEAST



Make room for your feast in the fridge and freezer.

Keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat and poultry, and keep all food away from household chemicals in your shopping cart and in bags.

Refrigerate perishable foods as soon as you get them home from the store.

**ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION to "SELL BY" & "USE BY" DATES.**

**BUY A FOOD THERMOMETER!**

## PREPARING your FEAST



**WASH HANDS, SURFACES & UTENSILS between EACH FOOD-PREP STEP.**

**THAW FORMULA: 4 LBS. PER 24 HOURS**  
Thaw frozen turkey in a refrigerator in its original packaging. Stuff turkey just prior to cooking.

**COOK TURKEY BREAST & STUFFING to 165°F**

Temperature is the only indicator that food is cooked for quality and safety. Turkey thighs are best at 175°F.

Keep hot foods above 140°F. Refrigerate all cold foods until ready to serve (40°F).

Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables just before using or consuming unless labeled "ready-to-eat" or "pre-washed."

## EATING your LEFTOVERS



Leftovers cool more quickly in shallow containers. Bring gravy to a boil before re-serving.

**REHEAT LEFTOVERS to 165°F**

**EAT or FREEZE LEFTOVERS within 3 to 4 DAYS.**  
**EAT or FREEZE GRAVY within 2 DAYS.**

**FIND MORE INFO at HOLIDAYFOODSAFETY.ORG EATTURKEY.COM**

~ sponsored by ~



# DON'T BUST YOUR BELT

## Healthy Eating During the Holidays

Maintaining healthy eating habits during the holiday season can be tough. With busy schedules and plenty of tempting but sinful foods on hand it's hard to stay on track.

Following these tips can help you avoid busting your belt this holiday season.

**1. Don't arrive on an empty stomach.** Although you maybe tempted to skip lunch so that you can splurge on dessert—don't! Have a bowl of cereal, vegetable sticks, fresh fruit or a small sandwich before you arrive. Skipping breakfast or lunch can cause you to overeat and consume more calories than you would if you had eaten something beforehand.

**2. Offer to bring a healthy dish.** This strategy not only provides you with a good menu option, but your host will greatly appreciate the help.

**3. Avoid excess alcohol and snacks.** Save your calories for the main meal. Alcohol provides many calories and virtually no nutrients. Also, try not to sit within arm's reach of tempting snack foods.

**4. Select small portions.** Moderation is the key. Selecting small portions allows you to control your calorie intake while enjoying all of the different items offered.

**5. Eat slowly.** Take time and enjoy the taste of your meal. Pace yourself and try to be the last person to finish each course. Take small bites and chew slowly. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message from your stomach that you are full. By eating slowly, you might be less likely to raid the dessert table.

**6. Leave the table when you are done.** If you linger at the table you may be tempted to continue eating even if you are not hungry. Stay long enough to enjoy the meal but leave the table while you are still ahead of the calorie game.

Adapted from UCLA's Student Nutrition Awareness Campaign's article on Healthy Eating for the Holidays.

# HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

## Combatting Stress During the Jolliest Season of the Year

It may come as a surprise that the holiday season is one of the most stressful times of year for many people. With unwelcome or awkward guests, increased spending and financial strain, parties, baking, travel and a thousand things to do it makes sense that people get overwhelmed.

Following these tips can help prevent stress in the first place and help make your holiday season more joyful.

**1. Acknowledge your feelings.** If you've recently lost someone or you can't be with your loved ones during the holidays, realize that it's normal to have these feelings. It's OK to take time to express these feelings.

**2. Reach out.** If you're feeling lonely or isolated seek out community or social gatherings or volunteer. Being around other people can lift your spirits and reduce loneliness.

**3. Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. Families grow and change and traditions change too. Choose to hold on to a few but be open to new ideas.

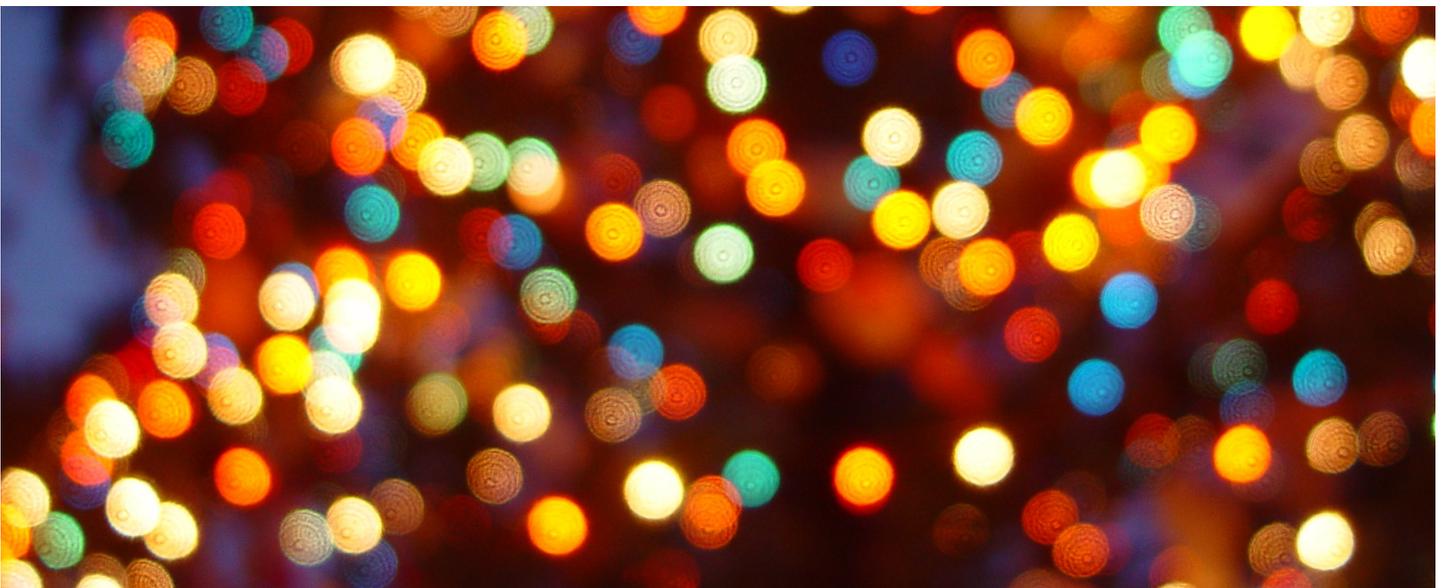
**4. Set aside differences.** Try to accept friends and family members as they are—even if they don't live up to your expectations. Set aside problems until a more appropriate time to discuss them arrives.

**5. Stick to a budget.** Before gift or grocery shopping set a budget and stick to it.

**6. Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Step away from the chaos and clear your mind—even if it's only for 15 minutes.

**7. Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts you may find that you can't overcome these feelings. If you find yourself to be persistently sad or anxious contact a doctor or mental health professional immediately.

Article adapted from "Stress, Depression and the Holidays" by the Mayo Clinic. Photo by Jonathan McIntosh.



# SOUTHERN AMBROSIA

8 oz. tub whipped topping  
1 c. sour cream  
20 oz. can crushed pineapples  
15 oz. can mandarin oranges  
1 cup seedless grapes cut in half  
1 1/2 c. sweetened coconut flakes  
1 1/2 c. mini marshmallows  
10 oz. jar maraschino cherries, well drained  
1/2 c. chopped pecans

1. Combine whipped topping and sour cream.
2. Add coconut and cherries.
3. Gently fold in remaining ingredients.
4. Cover with cellophane and refrigerate for one hour before serving.

Recipe: [thecountrycook.net](http://thecountrycook.net)



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