



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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‘Tis the Holiday Season: How to Make Yours Happy *and* Healthy

The holiday season is upon us and with it brings the joy of family, food and fun. However, holiday celebrations can encourage some to take a holiday from a healthy lifestyle. Set the example for your family by using the holidays as a time to build healthy habits together. First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission, along with the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, offers the following tips on how to keep the holidays as healthy as they are happy.

Stay active

Having healthy holidays begins by staying active, no matter what the circumstances.

- Spend quality time with family and friends by exercising together. Go with your family on a walk in the park or around the neighborhood. Make your walk festive by looking at holiday lights. If weather is a factor, try walking indoors at a shopping center or simply around your home.
- Make exercise fun with your kids by playing active games like freeze tag, leap frog and hide-and-seek.
- Limit time spent in front of the television to only two hours per day or less.

Eat healthier

Keep healthy food choices a top priority at holiday gatherings this year.

- Serve fruits, vegetables and nuts instead of chips and sweets.
- Help control the urge to overeat by offering small portions. Put food on small plates and limit the number of helpings served.

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Eat healthier
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- Try substituting healthier ingredients for recipe ingredients high in fat or sugar. For example, mix in applesauce instead of oil for baking with less fat.

Encourage holiday safety

While the holidays are most known for the fun they share, the season can also bring with it added dangers. Help protect loved ones for a healthy holiday season.

- Remove and dispose of all wrapping paper, bows, ribbons and bags immediately after unwrapping gifts. These materials can be a fire danger and a choking hazard for young children.
- Place all holiday decorations away from fireplaces, portable heaters and radiators. Also, make sure decorations do not block doorways.
- If buying toys for young children, be sure to check all tags and labels to make sure the toys are appropriate for the children's ages. Young children can be injured by toys with small parts, toys that plug into electrical outlets or toys with long pull strings.

First 5 Butte County wishes every family a happy and healthy holiday season. For more information on healthy habits, family-friendly holiday activities or First 5 Butte County programs, please call (530) 538-7964 or visit www.buttecounty.net/bccfc.

About the First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Butte County is committed to investing in programs and services that meet local needs.