

Life, Work & Family

Monthly work/life news for UAW-Represented DaimlerChrysler Workers November 2004

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[Keeping Holiday Stress at Bay](#)

Some people are excited to see the holiday season approaching while others are overcome by a sense of dread. Will life become so hectic that I can't enjoy the holidays? How will I buy what I want to buy and not overspend again this year? How will I ever get everything done that I need to do? How many pounds will I gain this year? Will the family get along? The list could go on and on, but all these questions, if ignored, lead to the same thing...STRESS! Try these tips for managing the stress that seems to be built into the holiday season.

Set Priorities

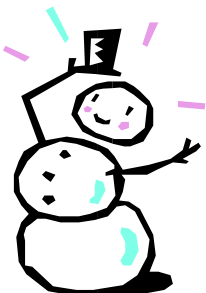
Many of us tend to get wrapped up in trying to create perfection at this time of the year. Set reasonable goals for what you will do to celebrate. Decide in advance what is most important to you and your family and focus your celebrations around those things. Try to avoid replicating everything your parents did when you were young. Hang on to meaningful traditions but avoid doing something solely because it is what your mom or dad did. Avoid over-scheduling – both you and your kids need some extra downtime to enjoy this special time of the year. Be careful to choose activities based on what you want to do rather than what you think you must do.

Make a Plan

Once you have decided what your priorities are for holiday celebrations, plan how you will organize yourself to get the important work done. Make a calendar and include all important dates on it (the school play, the neighbor's open house, the drive through the neighborhood to enjoy the holiday decorations, etc.) You may even want to schedule time for any shopping, decorating, baking, or other holiday traditions that you have decided will be part of your holiday. You don't have to do everything alone. Include your family in the decorating and baking activities. Even the very youngest children can help, and these are the memories that will last forever. Carefully plan your menus and do your shopping in an organized fashion, with a list. You will be much less likely to forget important ingredients and eliminate the last minute running that leaves you exhausted.

Keep Expectations Realistic

It is not your responsibility to be sure that everybody has a perfect holiday so don't put that demand on yourself – nobody else does! Holiday joy is something that comes from within a person



– you cannot create something that is not there.

Make a Budget and Keep It

If gift buying is part of your holiday celebration, decide in advance what you can afford to spend this year. Line up a babysitter early so that you can shop without the distractions that come with having children along with you. Create a list of all the people you will shop for and allocate a portion of your total holiday budget to each person. That is the easy part – the hard part is sticking to the budget you create! Try to think of less expensive gift options – a baking mix, a nicely framed photograph of a shared memory, or the gift of your time. Overspending during the holidays is a major source of stress so be careful. Remember that all the gifts in the world cannot buy happiness.

Care for Yourself and Your Family

During the holidays, when stress can really take its toll, we tend to neglect doing those things that reduce stress. We may overindulge in food and drink and leave such things as rest, relaxation, and exercise out of our daily lives. Make it a goal to change that this holiday season. Be realistic about the types and amounts of foods you choose. Avoid sugary and fat laden snacks that may give you a quick boost but will be followed by a drop in energy. Take the kids and get outside for a brisk walk. The exercise and fresh air will make the whole family feel better. Make it an after dark, under the stars walk to create a special memory. Be aware of what is causing you stress and make a plan to change the pressures you may be putting on yourself. Rest, relax, and reflect on the meaning of the season. Peace!

Signs that Your Aging Relative May Need Help

You haven't been at your older relative's home in a long time, and decide that you will make the trek during this holiday season. When you arrive, you are surprised by what you see. You notice unopened mail, unpaid bills, an empty refrigerator, or one that is full of spoiled food. Your relative has always been meticulous about his or her dress and now you find dirty clothes piled up in the bedroom or in other areas of the home. Your loved one may be confused about who family members are and you are concerned that he or she really needs help.



What do you do when you recognize that your older relative needs help? Stay calm. Approach the situation without alarming the older person you care about or causing him or her to become defensive. Step back and slow down unless the situation is life threatening.

- Start small. Gently offer to help tidy up the house or clean out the refrigerator while you are there. Listen to your elder and as you do so, gather information that will help you get a better picture of the situation.
- Talk to neighbors. Let them know what is going on – but don't violate the confidence of your loved one by sharing all the details. Give them your phone number and ask that they be your eyes and ears while you are away.
- Look for delinquent bills or any large checks written for cash. Abnormally large checks for cash may be a signal that the elder has been a victim of a scam.

Remember that you are visiting to celebrate the holidays. Be careful not to take away your older relative's pleasure at seeing you, or his or her sense of pride, by focusing too much on the things that aren't right. Before you leave, make sure that your relative has the assistance he or she needs to stay safe. When you get home, call a Care Consultant to get more information to help your aging loved one get any additional help he or she may need.

WORKING MOMS NEED TO TAKE TIME TO RELAX

When it comes to getting some R&R, women need to follow the lead of the guys, says Julie Shields, author of *How to Avoid the Mommy Trap*. Shields interviewed hundreds of working parents and found that men had something women need—the attitude of entitlement to a little fun and relaxation.

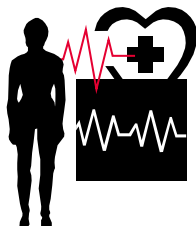
The author discusses how after men have put in a week at work they feel that they are owed some fun while women feel guilty for taking any time for themselves. But getting a break is what gives women more energy to accomplish their goal of being great parents.



If you experience this, adjusting your attitude will be necessary to get going in the right direction. Let go of the guilt and make a plan. Do something you really want to do and heighten your feelings of contentment and refreshment.

Adapted from: Working Mother

WATCH YOUR WEIGHT ON THE WEEKENDS



Determined to lose weight? According to a new study, you might want to pay closer attention to what you're "tucking away" on the weekend. The study, conducted by Pamela Haines, associate professor of nutrition at University of North Carolina, found that Americans between the ages of 19 and 50 were eating an average of 82 more calories a day on Friday, Saturday and Sunday than they consumed on a weekday. Haines says that over a period of a year this could translate into a five-pound weight gain. The study showed that people generally got fewer calories from protein and carbohydrates during the weekend and more from fat and alcohol.

Adapted from: Psychology Today

WHATS NEW

2005 DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PLAN

Don't miss this opportunity to contribute up to \$5000 of pre-tax income through payroll deduction. You can create a special account for dependent care expenses such as child care, adult day programs, before and after school programs. Save on Federal Income, Social Security and Medicare taxes!

- Who:** UAW represented employees
Current participants must re-enroll for 2005
- When:** November 11 – November 24, 2004
- How:** Contact Benefit Express at 1-888-456-7800 or enroll online at <http://resources.hewitt.com/daimlerchrysler>
- More info?** Call United Health Care at 1-877-311-7849 or visit

www.uaw-daimlerchryslerntc.org. Click on Circle of Life and then Dependent Care Assistance Plan.