

‘TIS THE SEASON TO BE TIRED AND RUN DOWN **Simple steps can help avoid hectic “holi-daze”**

Fort Worth (October 28, 2008) – Holidays are about family and sharing. They are also about too much to do and never enough time to do it.

“This is one of the happiest yet most stressful times of the year,” said Dr. Kelly Boulden of the Fibromyalgia & Fatigue Centers Inc. in Fort Worth. “People are busy enough with their everyday lives, but then they compound it with parties and family get-togethers, shopping, and ultimately, less sleep. It all adds up to stress and fatigue.”

Instead of heading for a holiday meltdown, Dr. Boulden suggests some simple steps to maintain a healthy balance:

- Make a “game plan” -- What do you need to accomplish? How much time will you need to shop, bake and fulfill family and social obligations? Be realistic when you budget your time and allow for extra days here and there for any emergencies that might pop up.
- It’s okay to say “no” -- Don’t feel obligated to attend every function you are invited to. It’s only an invitation, not a mandate for your appearance. If your schedule truly allows it, fine, if not, graciously decline; they’ll be other opportunities to socialize.
- Set a budget -- Before you begin your holiday spending spree, make a list of “who, what and how much” – and stick to it. Too many impulse purchases can leave you stressed and feeling the pinch as you continue to pay those bills after the holidays are over.
- Show some willpower -- Just as you set a budget, you must also decide when and how much you will stray from your normal eating habits. It’s understandable to do things a little differently during the holidays, but don’t overindulge or those extra pounds could be sending you on an extended guilt trip.
- Be flexible -- As family situations change through time, it’s okay to tweak those holiday traditions accordingly. The kids may now be grown with families of their own so it might now be harder to get everyone together. It’s okay to start new traditions – the world won’t end if you do things differently.
- Be realistic -- Life is full of surprises and the holidays are no different. Someone cancels at the last minute, you run out of time to bake the twelfth batch of cookies, you forget to pick up that extra gift for Aunt Jennie – take a deep breath and try not to stress. Remember, you are only human and things are going to happen; nothing, and no one, is ever perfect.

Doctors at the 12 Fibromyalgia & Fatigue Centers across the country have helped more than 15,000 patients who suffer from debilitating fatigue, but prepare each year to see more new patients around the holidays.

“Over exertion during the holidays can be tough, but the effects are often short-lived,” said Dr. Boulden. “We are more concerned with the folks who have been dealing with fatigue issues over the long-run and think it will just somehow go away. Often times, it won’t without intervention and changes to that person’s daily routine.”

Chronic Fatigue affects over four million Americans and is a condition marked with extreme exhaustion and fatigue. Patients suffer with severe fatigue, followed by other symptoms, such as substantial impairment in short-term memory or concentration, sore throat, tender lymph nodes, muscle pain, multi- joint pain, headaches, and non-refreshed sleep.

Fibromyalgia, often ignored as a true condition by the healthcare community, is characterized by muscle and joint pain, flu-like pain that can be severe and constant, a feeling of exhaustion, specific tender points, body aches, and muscle stiffness. It can also be accompanied by irritable bowel syndrome, sleep disturbance, headaches, anxiety, depression, and a variety of other symptoms. Many patients suffer with these symptoms for years before getting help.

It can affect any gender or age, but predominately affects women between 35 and 54 and has also been found to be genetic. The number of Americans suffering from this debilitating condition has risen in recent years to nearly 12 million, representing a population of nearly 4% in this country, causing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to approve the first drug to treat Fibromyalgia.

“We are so pleased to see our government health officials and others in the healthcare community finally recognizing the seriousness of this condition,” said Dr. Boulden. “The successful programs we have instituted at Fibromyalgia & Fatigue Centers are a radical departure from previous maintenance programs offered to sufferers of these conditions. It is a revolutionary effort to attack a growing problem affecting over 16 million Americans.”

So as the holidays arrive, remember the rules and most importantly, don’t forget to set aside time for yourself. Just a few minutes alone can refresh you enough to tackle that “to do” list.

“But if you find you can’t do it alone, we are here,” said Dr. Boulden.

For more information, go to www.fibroandfatigue.com or call (866) 443-4276.