

HOLIDAY BLUES



As a physician, I have the privilege of hearing human stories of greater depth and transparency than many people share with even their own friends and family. Because of this, I understand that the face we show the world is a thin veneer over all that we think and feel. This becomes even more apparent as the holidays approach. Cheerful rosy-cheeked women in Santa sweaters breeze in with a plates of cookies for the staff and spend the next half hour with my box of Kleenex!

Many people experience the *opposite* of joy around the Holidays, with moodiness setting in sometimes as soon as the first decorations show up in stores. (That was before Labor Day this year!) Some suffer from clinical or sub-clinical depression already and this time of year just accentuates things. Others have no history of mood disorders but seem to fall prey to the "Holiday Blues."

If the holiday lights are sparkling all the brighter for seeing them through tears, you should consider following these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Psychological Association, the National Mental Health Association, and the Mental Health Association of Colorado, and a few extras from Erin Kershisnik, MD.

If you are experiencing holiday blues:

- Establish realistic goals and expectations for the holiday season, and do not label the holiday season as a time to cure all past problems. The holidays do not prevent sadness or loneliness.
- Limit your drinking.
- Do not feel obliged to feel festive. Accept your inner experience and do not force yourself to express specific feelings. (Avoid comparing yourself to others – remember they have a veneer too, just like you!)
- If you have recently experienced a tragedy, death, or romantic breakup, tell a trusted person about your feelings.



- If the holidays remind you of the anniversary of a loss, try to take some quiet time to meditate on your happiest holiday memories – consciously dwell on positive reminiscence.
- To relieve holiday stress, know your spending limit and stick to it. Enjoy holiday activities that are free, such as driving around to look at holiday decorations. Go window shopping without buying anything. Try and hang around children, especially singing children, as much as possible!
- Express your feelings to those

around you in a constructive, honest, and open way. If you need to confront someone with a problem, begin your sentences with "I feel." Remember that at this time of year, everyone is probably doing the best that they can.

- Take a break from the commercial rush to reflect on or learn about the spiritual and cultural roots of Christmas and Hanukkah. Even if it is not a part of your tradition, these messages of hope are a welcome break from long lines and shopping lists.
- Give. Even if it means just carrying a little pocket change for the bell ringers. You'll feel richer and brighter for it.

If someone you know is experiencing holiday blues:

- Try to involve that person in holiday activities. Be proactive but not forceful.
- Be a good listener. If people seem depressed, hopeless, or express feelings of worthlessness, be supportive. Let them know you are there for them and are willing to help them seek professional help. Never issue challenges or dares.
- Familiarize yourself with resources such as mental health centers, counseling centers, and hotlines. A suicidal friend or family member may belong in the emergency room just as much as one having a heart attack.
- If the depressed person is chronically ill, express that you understand that the holidays do not cure the illness. Accept their limits!

Be aware that holidays can be difficult for people, especially when reality doesn't measure up to their expectations. Help them establish what is realistic and what is not.

So please, dwell on the things that give you the most joy this Christmas and Hanukkah Season and to all the rest say, "Fa-la-la-la-la----la-la-la!"

“Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

-- John F. Kennedy



As our first year of operation draws to a close, Vantage Physicians will be undergoing its first significant change. Dr. Ogilvie has decided to take an administrative and urgent care position in Pierce County and will no longer be working with Vantage Physicians. For those of you who have been a part of his practice, you should have already received a personal call from him explaining this difficult decision. I would extend an invitation to those of you from his practice that have not had an opportunity to meet me (Dr. Kerhisnik) to set up a time where we can greet one another.

As Vantage Physicians was only in its first year and most practices of this nature do not reach full capacity for at least two years, I will easily be able to accommodate as many of Dr. Ogilvie’s patients as choose to remain in the practice. As a solo practice, I am taking the necessary steps to ensure that during a few weeks out of the year when I am out of the office, your medical care will be in competent

hands. I will even continue to welcome your referrals for new patients. At a pre-determined point, we will close the practice to new enrollees in order to continue to make good on our commitment to the following levels of service:

- Appointments typically available the same day you call
- Call backs to your after-hours page within the hour, 24-7
- Non-urgent emails answered within 2-3 days
- Phone messages answered within the business day
- Prescriptions refilled within 24 hours
- Minimum visit times of 30 minutes
- Phone visits scheduled at your request
- Occasional home visits when needed

So, while you may see our procedures and work flow altered a little as we adjust to change, the unprecedented level of care and service you have come to expect will not be disturbed

CHANGE ANNOUNCES

2007 FEE SCHEDULE

Our previous fee schedule was based on age and percent discounts for number of family members enrolled. Certain complexities resulted in a few errors that caused some families to be undercharged. Rather than balance bill for our own errors, we have just simplified the fee schedule for 2007 as seen below. If your fee increases as a result it represents a correction in last year's error rather than an intentional rate increase. Our apologies for any confusion or inconvenience this may cause.



2007 Monthly Fee Schedule

Adult \$90

Couple \$160

Child (birth-22 in home or full time student) \$40

Family Plan (families of 4 or more) \$240

***Special Care Plan \$200**

5% discount for paying annually

*Vantage's Special Care Plan is a new membership category created in response to the popularity of Home Visits. Because Vantage is a primarily office based practice, housecalls are scheduled in advance on a non-emergent basis and are typically done outside of normal office hours so that we can be available to our other patients. All Vantage patients may request a home visit if they are temporarily house bound and unable to drive. For those who wish to have their care **exclusively** in their home we have created a separate membership and rate.

Note: Nursing home and hospice patients will continue to be assessed the regular adult fee.

SOME CHRISTMAS HUMOR

15 Ways To Confuse Santa Claus (author unknown)

1. Instead of milk and cookies, leave him a salad, and a note explaining that you think he could stand to lose a few pounds.
2. While he's in the house, go find his sleigh and write him a speeding ticket.
3. Leave him a note, explaining that you've gone away for the holidays. Ask if he would mind watering your plants.
4. While he's in the house, replace all his reindeer with exact replicas. Then wait and see what happens when he tries to get them to fly.
5. Leave a note by the telephone, telling Santa that Mrs. Claus called and wanted to remind him to pick up some milk and a loaf of bread on his way home.
6. While he's in the house, find the

7. Leave a plate filled with cookies and a glass of milk out, with a note that says, "For the Tooth Fairy."
8. Take everything out of your house as if it's just been robbed. When Santa arrives, show up dressed like a policeman and say, "Well, well. They always return to the scene of the crime."
9. Leave out a copy of your Christmas list with last-minute changes and corrections.
10. Leave lots of hunting trophies and guns out where Santa's sure to see them. Go outside, yell, "Ooh! Look! A deer! And he's got a red nose!" and fire a gun.
11. Leave Santa a note, explaining that you've moved. Include a map with unclear and hard-to-read directions to your new house.

12. Leave out a Santa suit, with a dry-cleaning bill.
13. Paint "hoof-prints" all over your face and clothes. While he's in the house, go out on the roof. When he comes back up, act like you've been "trampled." Threaten to sue.
14. Instead of ornaments, decorate your tree with Easter eggs.
15. Dress up like the Easter Bunny. Wait for Santa to come and then say, "This neighborhood ain't big enough for the both of us."



If you would like future publications of this newsletter emailed to you, please call us at 360-438-1161 or email your physician:

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HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!!!



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