



**December 7, 2009**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Maryanne Aldrich**

**(603) 747-9189**

### **MANAGING STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

The count down is on with the holiday season fast approaching. Stress levels during this time of year will most likely escalate for many of us as we try to manage work and our families, along with holiday shopping, cooking, and traveling. With many holiday gatherings, you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed. Stress can be felt as a physical or emotional reaction to demanding situations, even those situations we think of as pleasant such as the holidays. Keeping things simple will help lower those stress levels.

- Set realistic expectations of how you envision your holiday events and what is achievable. Don't worry if gatherings aren't perfect. The ultimate goal is to spend time with the people who are important to you.
- Make a to-do list of things you want to get accomplished and don't be afraid to ask family members for help.
- Set a goal of sticking to a budget and not spending more than you can afford.
- Give baked goods or hand-made items as gifts.
- Start shopping early. To prevent multiple trips to the store, make a list of what to buy.
- Shop on the Internet or from mail-order catalogs.
- Take advantage of in-store gift wrapping services.
- If you have a large family, draw names and alternate gift giving each year instead of feeling obligated to buy each member a gift.
- Stay focused on enjoying the positive moments and on everything going well.
- Remember how fortunate we are to have the joy of our families and the gift of life.

The holidays add new challenges and demands on our time. If you feel like things are getting out of control, don't let your emotions get the best of you. Forgetting to take care of ourselves day after day leaves us physically and emotionally drained. Take a break and do something nice for yourself. Try to stick to your exercise routine, go see a movie you've been waiting to see. Schedule a hair cut or a manicure, or go for a walk with the dog. Figuring out what sort of activity works for you will help you decompress and focus on the positive. The better you're able to manage your thoughts, the more you'll enjoy yourself this holiday season.

Cottage Hospital is a 25 bed, critical access hospital serving the beautiful Upper Connecticut River Valley. For additional information regarding Cottage Hospital and any of our services visit us on the web at [www.cottagehospital.org](http://www.cottagehospital.org) or call (603)747-9000.