



## Holiday Safety Tips

MedStar wishes everyone a joyous and safe upcoming holiday. Here are some tips, based on the most common types of 911 calls we respond to over the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

### Vehicle Crashes: 402 Calls

Stay safe on the roads over the holidays — and every day:

- [Prepare your car for winter](#) and keep an [emergency kit](#) with you.
- Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid [drowsy driving](#).
- Leave early, planning ahead for heavy traffic.
- Make sure every person in the vehicle is properly buckled up no matter how long or short the distance traveled.
- Put that cell phone away; [many distractions occur while driving](#), but cell phones are the main culprit.
- Practice defensive driving.
- Designate a sober driver to ensure guests make it home safely after a holiday party; [alcohol](#) or over-the-counter, prescription and illegal drugs can cause impairment.

### Falls: 286 Calls

*Friends and family members who do not always go out, may go to places of worship, or relative's homes over the holidays:*

- Be aware of fall risks when with loved ones.
- Loose rugs, clutter on the floor (like toys, boxes and wrapping paper!).
- Help older family members navigate stairs and uneven areas.
- Assure good lighting to help people see items that could be fall risks.

### Behavioral Health Emergencies: 191 Calls

*The holidays can be a very stressful and emotional time:*

- Be intentional about observing for signs of emotional and psychological effect of the holidays.
- Keep in close touch with friends and family members who may be struggling due recent loss of a loved one.
- Note any changes in mood or behavior.
- If someone 'falls of the radar screen', seek them out to assure they are OK.

### Abdominal Pain: 157 Calls

*Keep your holidays happy by handling **food** safely.*

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food.
- Keep raw meat away from fresh produce.
- Use separate cutting boards, plate and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature.
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftover food within two hours of being served.
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly.
- Thanksgiving leftovers are safe for three to four days when properly refrigerated.



### Give Back –

- Area blood banks continue to be at very low levels.
- Holidays generally result in a higher need for blood.
- Consider a family outing for a blood donation at a local blood bank.

***Finally, keep your community's First Responders in your thoughts and prayers. While you are enjoying time with family and friends over the holiday, they won't be, as they will be on-duty, helping to keep you safe!***

