Are you ready for the holidays?

During the two months around the holidays, more than 14,000 people are treated in emergency rooms for injuries related to holiday decorating.

Over 30 percent of home fires are caused by cooking.

(US Consumer Product Safety Commission)
(National Fire Protection Agency)

Decorating safety tips:

- Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the UL label.
- Check each light strand for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs. Always unplug the lights before replacing a bulb.
- Make sure extension cords are in good condition and are UL-approved. They should be rated to carry the electrical load intended.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Keep cords away from doors, windows or heavy furniture that could pinch and damage the cord’s insulation.
- Match plugs with outlets. Do not force a three-pronged plug into a two-pronged outlet or extension cord. Never remove the third prong.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving home.
- Place fresh-cut trees away from heat sources such as appliances and televisions. Water a fresh-cut tree frequently.

Cooking safety tips:

- Inspect all small appliances and electric cords to make sure they are in good repair before using. Do not use appliances with cracked or frayed cords.
- Read the operating instructions of any appliance before use.
- When purchasing new kitchen appliances, look for UL-Listed appliances with automatic shut-off features.
- Never plug more than one high-wattage appliance into a single outlet.
- Keep cooking areas empty and devoid of grease.
- Stay focused and attentive to baking, brewing, and simmering foods.
- Make sure outlets near sinks are equipped with properly tested ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to prevent shocks.
- Always have a working fire extinguisher on hand, and know how to operate it.

Sources: Tipmont Rural Electric Membership Corporations (http://www.tipmont.org)
The Electrical Safety Foundation International (http://www.esfi.org)
Dealing with Holiday Stress

Know your spending limit  Set a limit and do not spend more than planned. It is okay to tell your child that a certain toy costs too much.

Give something personal  Show love and caring with a gift that is meaningful and personal. You can also use words instead. Make a phone call or write a note to share your feelings.

Get organized  Make lists or use an appointment book to keep track of tasks to do and events to attend.

Share the tasks  Share your "to do" list with others. Spend time with friends and family while you share tasks like decorating, wrapping gifts, and preparing the holiday meal.

Learn to say no  Saying “no” to events that are not important to you will allow more time to say ‘yes’ to events that you do want to attend.

Be realistic  Avoid putting pressure on yourself to create the perfect holiday for your family. Focus on the traditions that make holidays special for you. Also remember, just because it is a holiday, family problems do not go away. If you have a hard time being around relatives, it is okay to set limits on your time at events and visits.

During the holidays, keep a regular sleep, meal, and exercise schedule. Limit alcohol consumptions. Holidays can trigger depression. They can be especially hard if you are already dealing with the death of a loved one or the breakup of a relationship. Get support if you need it.

Sources: http://www.webmd.com