



NEWS RELEASE

Australian Divisions of General Practice Ltd.

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Relax in the season of stress

While Australians gear up for a fun festive season, Australia's GPs have issued a warning of caution that Christmas can be a stressful time for many in our community.

Dr Rob Walters, Chair of the Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) says stress and anxiety are often lurking among the tinsel and Christmas pudding.

ADGP is the peak national body representing Australia's 120 Divisions of General Practice. About 95 per cent of GPs belong to a local Division of General Practice.

"The financial pressures on families at this time of year can lead to stress," Dr Walters says.

"The emphasis on family, friends and shared good times during the festive season can also make isolated people feel depressed and unloved.

"Lifeline CEO Dawn Smith has revealed that Lifeline experiences an increase of calls from people experiencing family problems and loneliness over the Christmas period, particularly later on Christmas Day.

"Last year Lifeline received almost 9000 calls from around Australia between December 18 and 26. This included 50 calls a day from people specifically at risk of suicide."

Dr Walters has urged people vulnerable to depression and anxiety to use self-help strategies for the Christmas week ahead. If in doubt, see your local GP.

"If you, or someone you know, experience stress and anxiety, look after yourself by being moderate with your food and alcohol consumption, enjoy simple relaxing exercises such as going for a walk, keep in touch with loved ones, and avoid known triggers.

"If you have no-one to share Christmas Day with, consider volunteering with a charity organisation that serves Christmas lunch.

"Remember that you are not alone. There are support services available for you. Plan strategies ahead of time with your GP. Lifeline is also available 24 hours-a-day by phoning 13 11 14."

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