

# Snuff Out Holiday Entertaining Stress

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Lafayette's Misto Lino offers tips for easy holiday entertaining and decorating.

**6. Let others prepare or bring food.** Ask guests to bring a dish already prepared. This keeps the kitchen free of too many people trying to use limited space. Or consider purchasing part of the meal or the entire dinner. Stores like Lafayette's Diablo Foods offer a complete holiday meals for a reasonable price.

**7. Enlist help.** Kids can set the table. Family members can take shifts with the clean-up duties. If it's too hard for you to ask for help, get your spouse or a sibling to ask for you. "It's important for men and boys to help too. Boys need to see men helping in the kitchen," says Reyerson.

**8. Vent.** If you need to vent your frustrations, find a trusted friend or family member and do it. As

Reyerson says, "Get it off your chest; discharge it instead of keeping it in. You don't want it to come out later in another form."

**9. Have a plan for dealing with conflict if it arises.** "If you are concerned about divisive political opinions or a family member's drinking issues, think of ways to change the subject and redirect the conversation," Ryerson says. "Remind your guests that we are all here to appreciate each other. Don't give attention to bad behavior." You can also use place cards if you feel the need to keep certain family members separated.

**10. Remember to enjoy the day.** Cherish the time to be with your family. Sit down. Relax. It doesn't



send a good message to children when they see mom and dad stressed out or running around the entire day.

Cecconi suggests setting time aside right before guests arrive to relax, sip some sparkly and enjoy the fruits of your labor. "Getting in the right frame of mind before a party will set the tone for the whole event," she says.

Finally, try to see the Holidays through the children's eyes. Perfect gravy or elaborate decorations don't matter; the relationships and the tone of the day do.

Happy Holidays!

[Peggy Spear contributed to this article.]