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## How to say no to a Christmas invite

It's that time of year where invites to Christmas parties come flooding in to fill up your calendar and all your free time. The party season can be fun time for celebrating with family, friends and colleagues, but when we're overloaded with invitations to festive celebrations the merriment can quickly turn to stress and exhaustion.

Learning to say 'no' to Christmas events is a great way to protect your [mental health](#). Being in control of what parties and dinners you attend is the most effective way to avoid [Christmas 'burnout'](#) - physical and mental exhaustion caused by the [stress](#) and pressure of constantly socialising over the holiday season.

## Reasons for wanting to decline a Christmas party

**According to a survey of 3,228 Patient.info readers, there are five top reasons given for declining, or wanting to decline an invite**

1. Attending may cause me social anxiety.
2. Attending may be expected but I won't have fun.
3. Attending may cost me too much money.
4. Attending may be too exhausting.
5. I'm embarrassed about my appearance.

### Social anxiety

A total of 503 readers reported [social anxiety around Christmas](#) as their main reason for not wanting to attend a Christmas event from the survey. This is a form of [anxiety](#) that is specifically related to social situations, and it can affect anyone.

According to the [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy \(BACP\)](#), you may be experiencing social anxiety before a Christmas celebration if instead of excitement, you feel [sick](#), stressed, have an intense feeling of impending doom, are [sweating](#), or have a quickened heart rate.

### **The pressure to have fun**

If you've ever felt like going was expected but you won't have fun, 443 of our readers agree. Many of us feel the pressure to constantly meet with people over the season, regardless of the effect on our health, energy levels, or wallets.

### **Financial stress**

The [financial strain over Christmas](#), particularly in the context of the [cost of living crisis](#), that can come from attending events and buying outfits, gifts, food and drink can be a big [cause of stress](#). 379 readers have wanted to decline an invitation because of the costs.

### **Exhaustion**

Exhaustion – or burnout – is also a common experience during this busy time of year, and was reported by 361 readers. For many of us, this is made worse by [excessive drinking](#), whether this be at [work Christmas parties](#) or with family and friends. It's important to [drink safely over the festive season](#) to reduce mental and physical exhaustion.

### **Body image**

Being self-conscious of our appearance can sometimes prevent us from enjoying the festivities even when we may want to. In particular, staying [body positive over Christmas](#) can be challenging when we're under pressure to dress up for Christmas parties and dinners.

Remember, it's OK and normal to fluctuate in weight a little over winter [when we crave more comfort food](#).

## **Thinking about what you need this Christmas**

Whatever your reasons, know that it's okay to turn down an invite this Christmas if you don't think you'll have fun. After all, Christmas celebrations are supposed to be enjoyable occasions.

Mental health charity [Mind](#) has the following advice for coping with Christmas<sup>1</sup>:

- It's OK to prioritise what's best for you.
- Think about what you need, and whether you really need to do things if you're not looking forward to them.
- Set boundaries and say no to things that aren't helpful for you.
- Take time out from Christmas.

Learning to say no does not mean embracing your inner Christmas Grinch or Scrooge. In fact, turning down some invitations can also mean that you feel less overwhelmed and more energised to attend and have a better time at others. It's all about finding the right balance for you.

## Top excuses for turning down a festive invitation

Out of 1,454 Patient.info readers, 73.5% admitted to having told a "little white lie" to avoid a festive celebration.

### Favourite excuses for declining an invitation

These were:

1. Sorry, I won't be around: 38%.
2. Sorry, but this clashes with my extended family invitation: 28.5%.
3. Sorry, but my partner and I have plans and we get little alone time together: 8%.
4. Sorry, but I have to work late: 6%.
5. Sorry, I have a new puppy/kitten/goldfish and I can't leave them alone: 5.5%.
6. Sorry, this sounds like fun, but I must decline to avoid burnout this season: 4.5%.
7. Sorry, but no one can babysit the children/my child: 2.5%.

Fewer than 1 in 20 are happy to tell people if they're feeling burned out – a small amount compared to a recent survey which found that around 7 in 20 people experience [burnout over the Christmas season](#).

Instead, most people feel more comfortable relying on handy excuses. Around 2 in 5 readers prefer to rely on the vague excuse "sorry, I won't be around". Using an extended family gathering was also the favoured excuse for more than 1 in 4 readers, followed by having special plans with a partner.

Whether you like to fall back on one of these popular "white lies", want to keep your excuses vague, or prefer to be honest about managing Christmas burnout, it's important to feel comfortable turning down events if they are causing you a lot of stress.

## Further reading

1. [Mind: Christmas and mental health.](#)
2. [SWNS Digital: Holiday burnout is a real thing, study finds.](#)

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