

# Tame the Gremlin inside this holiday season

by Elizabeth Sindelar-Loy  
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For centuries we have deliberately tamed animals to go against their natural instincts. From lions to house cats, over time we have broken them of innate behaviors to gain control through domestication. Unlike animals, humans have broken our own biological behaviors and lost control of our bodies. The proof of this loss of control can be seen clearer this time of year as illness and depression rises.

“You’re a mean one Mr. Grinch.”

Although one in three Americans struggles with depression, learning to decrease our level on the Grinch Scale will translate into a more enjoyable holiday season. Of course, focusing on self-care (you know, putting yourself first in a selfless season) is the number one rule above all to make it through this time of year. But, is there a gremlin lurking inside us all that we could “tame” to help us achieve a lower number on the green one’s scale?

The gremlin’s name? Inflammation.

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but every single one of us has some level of inflammation throughout our bodies. How much or how little determines where you fall on the Grinch Scale. Although now you are probably thinking, “No, I don’t”, “What kind of snake oil is she about to sell me?” or “Does she just want to write an article that refers to green Christmas characters?”

Although all valid insights, this article is backed by science. Inflammation is a vital part of our immune system as it’s our body’s natural defense system against harmful bacteria, viruses and trauma (i.e. broken bone, cut...etc.) Unfortunately, scientists have discovered that a mysterious “short-circuit” occurs in the communication channels leading to a build-up of inflammation in the organs, including the brain.

According to articles published by Harvard and Johns Hopkins, when this miscommunication happens a foundation is laid for chronic illnesses like Autism, Cancer, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Alzheimer’s and Depression/Anxiety (but really the list goes on). Therefore, the key to limiting this “short-circuit” from occurring is to be aware of what triggers the gremlin.

As we get further into the holiday season our inner gremlin will try to trick us into feeding it after midnight or getting it wet, ultimately wreaking havoc in the body. Well...not really. Instead the holiday season will make it easier for our little gremlin to

get what it needs to grow – Stress, Sugar, Gluten and Alcohol. Despite our bodies “short-circuiting” remains a mystery, research has found that lifestyle choices – physical, emotional, chemical and environmental – can either keep the gremlin at bay or cause it to unleash insurmountable damage.

If you don't want to be called a Grinch or have your gremlin multiply this holiday season, practice moderation. No one wants to disappoint Grandma by refusing her homemade pie but limit yourself to a small slice instead of two or more big pieces. If you limit the factors that cause inflammation, you'll be singing “Welcome Christmas come this way,” this holiday season.

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