

DREAMING OF A STRESS FREE CHRISTMAS

Christmas could be a hazard to our health and homes according to a new study from **Lloyds TSB Insurance**, which shows that one in twenty people rank the festive season as being more stressful than divorce or burglary.

In fact, the nation's celebrations could be marred by mounting tension, as more and more people buckle under the pressure of preparing for Christmas. A third of the population (36 per cent) cite the stress of present buying as the cause of most pressure, while one in ten (11 per cent) feel the angst of deciding who makes it on to their Christmas day guest list. 'Supermarket stress' was the main anxiety for ten per cent who dread the last minute rush for the few remaining Brussels sprouts and Christmas puddings. For a large slice of the population (seven per cent) it's the turkey that is the source of most strain as the dread of cooking Christmas dinner starts to bite.

Phil Loney, managing director Lloyds TSB Insurance, said: "Come December, as the decorations go up, the nation's blood pressure will be on the rise too. Despite our best efforts to keep the Christmas spirit flowing, the stress of present buying, turkey roasting and entertaining mean that most of us ultimately crack under the strain. The only consolation is that we don't have Santa's workload."

Worryingly, the vast majority of people (98 per cent) did not have extra insurance to cover the extra valuables in their homes over the Christmas period, despite the fact that some insurers do offer additional cover over the holiday.

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The Lloyds TSB Insurance research shows that seasonal stress takes its toll in several ways. A quarter of those celebrating Christmas (27 per cent) admitted they'd forgotten to buy presents in the past, while a similar number (24 per cent) had fallen out with a friend or relative. One in ten (11 per cent) said their heightened tension had caused them to have accidents in the kitchen. To add to this catalogue of woe, two per cent were burgled while out celebrating.

However, some people have found ways to alleviate the stress. One in ten (9 per cent) say they'll be heading abroad, while seven per cent would resort to staying in the office and working over the holiday. Six per cent would completely avoid any cooking at all by eating out on Christmas day, while one in twenty would invite themselves over to friends! A grinch-like six per cent said they would cancel Christmas altogether.

Phil Loney continued: "While it's important not to dampen our Christmas spirit, it makes sense to consider some of the potential pitfalls as the festive tension takes its toll. Family arguments and faulty presents are one thing, but the risk of burglary, as thieves go out in search of newly unwrapped gifts, makes adequate cover all the more crucial."

For anyone who is a victim of theft over the Christmas period, Lloyds TSB Insurance helps ease the pain, by resolving and paying out claims within a day. For more information on Lloyds TSB Insurance, visit **insurance.co.uk** or call 0800 056 3040.

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Notes to Editors:

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