

Enjoying the Holidays as a Caregiver

Holidays are traditionally a time of celebration, but stress and depression can spoil your holidays and harm your health.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** It's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's okay to cry if you're sad or lonely and it's okay to be mad if you're angry.
- **Continue to celebrate holidays and family events,** even if things must be done differently. Remember, the holidays don't need to be perfect. Consider being open to new traditions while holding on to SOME of the old.
- **Work out a way to attend celebrations,** even if your relative is unable to go. Find ways to include your relative in some of the fun – bring home photos, flowers or a piece of dessert.
- **Prioritize.** Make a list of what you want to accomplish. Then separate the “have to” list from the “want to” list and eliminate all that truly doesn't need to be done. This will take some unnecessary stressors off your plate.
- **Ask for help** with activities such as baking, shopping, crafting and visiting. If you must shop, plan first. This will help prevent last minute rushing.
- **Learn to say “no”!** Saying “yes” when you should be saying “no” can leave you feeling overwhelmed, resentful and stressed. Realize that you can't make everyone happy all the time; their expectations may be unfair.
- **Accept help.** Recognize that you can't do everything. Have ideas in mind for when someone offers to help (shopping, cooking, etc.) and acknowledge even the smallest help with a “thank you”.



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