

HOLIDAYS

WAYS TO MANAGE THE UNIQUE STRESSES AROUND THE HOLIDAYS

What holidays we celebrate may be variable, but we can all agree that holidays are often stressful. Here are some ways to enjoy your holidays and minimize your stress.

HOLIDAY PREPARATION

The holidays are often filled with traditions and lots of expectations. Holiday movies and treasured memories can lead to the belief that we need to have “perfect” holidays, which can sometimes create unnecessary stress. Managing that stress after a brain injury can lead to additional challenges such as:

- Fatigue/decreased energy
- Changes in finances after an injury
- Changes in habits or mobility impacting traditions

Some ways you can prepare for the holidays include:

- Think about what makes the holidays most meaningful to you. We all want to do it all, but when that isn't possible to do everything make sure you do the things that matter most to you.
 - If you love baking cookies, maybe it's okay if you don't decorate this years.
- Plan for your holiday preparation.
- Try not to save things till the last minute. Do a little bit every day rather than trying to do it all at once.
- Make a budget and stick with it.
- If there are things that don't fit in the budget, try to think of a creative work-around or maybe cut that out this year.
- After an injury can be a great time for new traditions. If there are things that won't work emotionally with you energy level or your financial budget, this can be an opportunity to try something new.

ENJOYING THE HOLIDAY

On an important day like a holiday, it can be easy to get so busy that you miss the day. After a brain injury, fatigue and overwhelm can make this even worse. Make sure to:

- Take breaks, schedule a nap, do what you can and try to be flexible about the rest.
- Identify what is important about the holiday, whether that is family or what you are celebrating. Make it a point to emphasize what matters and acknowledge that nothing is perfect.
- If you have made changes such as dietary changes, given up alcohol or other substances, share these goals with someone you love at the celebration. They can help support you and help interper if you are getting pressure from someone else.
- Let people know in advance what might be different for you this year including budget, decorations, meal changes, etc. that way everyone is ready to enjoy the holiday you have planned and is less likely to be disappointed.
- Consider letting someone else host the holiday and you can support them.
- Accept help, whether you are hosting or not, let other people share the work. Remember, other people might celebrate differently and that's okay. It's always a good time to make new traditions and build new holiday memories.

Prepared in collaboration with:

