



TIPS

for Coping With the Holidays

The holidays may be a time for celebration, but they can also be quite trying—especially for people with neurologic or psychological disorders. Here are some suggestions for minimizing the holiday blues.

- ❑ **Don't let healthy habits take a holiday.** Whether you're a host or a guest, try to maintain a healthy lifestyle and encourage others to do the same. Overindulging in sweets can lead to sugar-induced hyperactivity or an upset stomach, while too much drinking can provoke inappropriate behavior and interfere with medications. In contrast, exercise can help to ward off depression and anxiety—and it's especially important if you're eating more. Remember to maintain your regular schedule of medications, and help your loved ones to do the same.
- ❑ **Get help when necessary.** If you or a loved one experiences depression, anxiety, insomnia, or other physical or mental health problems over the holidays, don't hesitate to contact a doctor or mental health professional.
- ❑ **Plan ahead.** Rushing is a surefire way to increase holiday stress. You can prevent last-minute scrambling by setting aside specific days for shopping, visiting, and other activities. If you're traveling by air, give yourself about twice as much time as you think you'll need to make a flight—and remember that wheelchair accommodations and other airport services might be in short supply.
- ❑ **Reap the benefits of socializing.** If you're feeling lonely, community or religious organizations may offer opportunities to be with people. You also can alleviate others' loneliness by reaching out to relatives or friends whom you haven't seen in a while. If you're attending a gathering, try to include everyone in the conversation—many older people are able to recall the distant past despite their memory problems.

This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at info@neurologyreviews.com.

Tips for Patients are available for download at www.neurologyreviews.com.

