Top Tips for Coping With Cancer During the Holidays

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Coping With Cancer During the Holidays

Coping with cancer during the holidays brings a mixed bag of emotions. Visiting with friends and family can be fun and joyful, but it’s impossible to forget that you’re fighting a serious battle for your health.

Loved ones will also feel the strain, and the hectic holiday rush can quickly overwhelm your sense of control and your ability to devote due time to your health and treatment.

Staying healthy during the holidays can feel like a challenge, but don’t let the holiday stress and concern overcome your holiday cheer. Cancer may force you to change some traditions, but communication and creativity will help you get the most out of the season without compromising your health or energy.

Pick and Choose your Traditions

The holiday season is marked by tradition, from family feasts to annual outings and grand events to mark special days. Unfortunately, cancer and treatment can leave you feeling sore, exhausted and generally cheerless while festivities spring up around you. It’s important to learn how to balance rest and social engagement to ensure you're staying healthy during the holidays.

Thin Out Your Schedule

Activity can spike suddenly as the holiday season approaches, and while it’s a great opportunity to see friends and family, you need to ease into the festivities. Be prepared to turn down some invitations if you need to rest, and think twice about hosting a party.

On the other hand, isolation leads to a dreary perspective and less inclination to take good care of yourself, so try your best to participate in a few gatherings, even for a short amount of time.

Change Up Your Normal Tradition

You may assign some of the tasks you usually take on to your spouse and your children. They can help with putting up the decorations and the tree.

If the kids are old enough, they can take on some of the cooking preparation. Some families have a potluck occasion; you can then just worry about fixing the main course. You may see if your siblings would be willing to host the family get together this year.

Get Creative With Gifts

Holiday gift giving can quickly get out of control, and it generally brings unnecessary stress and fatigue. Tone it

down this year by finding one or two special tokens of gratitude for the people closest to you, and think about ordering online rather than fighting the crowds in the shops.

There are plenty of crafty ways to celebrate friends and family without venturing too far or expending too much energy: do some baking, make thoughtful holiday cards, compile a scrapbook or recipe book, or create pretty ornaments.

Let Someone Else do It

You can also forego any planning at all if friends or family are already putting their own celebrations together. Make a dessert or snack to bring so you feel like you contributed. You should pace yourself with your activities so that you don't burn out too early.

If you have a number of holiday invitations, don't feel guilty about turning a few down to think about your self care. However, try to enjoy a few outings. It will be good for your spirit. Some community organizations have free events that you can take your children to.

Change Your Perspective

Instead of dwelling on the traditions you couldn't keep this year, or how this holiday season is bound to be different, celebrate everything you do have and try to live in the moment.

Keep a cancer-friendly diet, but bring in the flavors of the season. Share your joy and be thankful for the people you love – a positive attitude will go far to creating happy, lasting memories.

Communicate Well to Feel Better

When you're living with cancer, the stress and demands of the holiday season can remind you of your limitations, and it's natural to feel depressed, sad or frustrated. But this is the time of year when people come together, and you should take advantage of the friends and family who are happy to lend a hand or simply listen to your thoughts.

Sometimes holiday cheer is too much to bear, and it can be difficult to hide behind a smile when you really want to cry. It's perfectly fine to let yourself express your emotions, and as long as you are clear and open with the people around you, they will understand and offer their attention. Remind them that, although it's a happy time of year for others, you're fighting a difficult fight every day.

Coping with cancer during the holidays can be easier if you get together with a couple of good friends or family members for an afternoon, and instead of making plans, just sit and talk. Sometimes you don't realize just how badly you need to unload some tears, laughter, or concerns until you're in the midst of a comfortable conversation with people you love. The holidays can be full of high expectations – try to expect less of yourself, simplify social time, and get the physical and emotional rest you need.