Assisting Hands® Home Care

Hand in Hand
eNewsletter



Finding joy in the season: Making the holidays meaningful at any age

The holidays often bring cherished traditions, family gatherings, and special memories. But for some older adults, the season can also bring feelings of loneliness, grief, or stress. Changes in health, mobility, or family circumstances may make celebrating look different than it once did. The good news is that meaningful holiday moments don't have to be elaborate to be special. Here are a few suggestions to make the season brighter for seniors and their loved ones:

• **Keep favorite traditions alive.** Listening to familiar holiday music, decorating a small tree, baking a favorite recipe, or watching a beloved holiday movie can bring comfort and joy.

• **Create opportunities to connect.** If travel is difficult, arrange a video call, share photos, or schedule a few shorter visits instead of one long gathering.

• **Include seniors in the preparations.** Depending on their abilities and interests, older adults may enjoy addressing holiday cards, folding napkins, sharing family recipes, or helping choose decorations.

• **Make gatherings comfortable**. Consider seating, lighting, room temperature, and noise levels. A quiet space can provide a welcome break if a gathering becomes overwhelming.

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• **Be mindful of changing abilities.** Some traditions may need to be adapted to current abilities. Focus on what a loved one can comfortably enjoy now, rather than what they used to do.

• **Make room for mixed emotions.** Holidays can bring memories of loved ones who are no longer here. Listening, sharing stories, and acknowledging those feelings can be more meaningful than trying to cheer someone up.

It's also important to remember that not everyone celebrates the holidays in the same way. A friendly conversation, a favorite meal, or simply spending time together can be just as meaningful as a large family gathering.

The most memorable celebrations aren't necessarily the biggest or busiest. ***They're the ones that help people feel loved, included, and connected.***

Diabetes and the holidays

The holidays are filled with favorite foods, family gatherings, and special traditions. For older adults living with diabetes, however, the season can bring a few extra challenges. Holiday meals, changes in daily routines, and tempting treats may make blood sugar management more difficult. Fortunately, having diabetes doesn't mean missing out on the foods and activities that make the season special.

Enjoy favorite foods in moderation. Rather than feeling you must avoid every holiday treat, pay attention to portion sizes and balance your plate with vegetables, lean proteins, and other nutritious choices.

Don't skip meals. Skipping breakfast or lunch to save room for a large holiday dinner can make blood sugar management more challenging, particularly for people taking certain diabetes medications.

Stay hydrated. Drink water regularly throughout the day unless a healthcare professional has recommended limiting fluids. Dehydration can affect overall well-being and may complicate diabetes management.

Keep moving. A short walk after a meal, a little dancing, or gentle indoor movement can help support blood sugar management. Choose activities that are safe and appropriate for your mobility and fitness level.

Maintain your usual routine. Busy holiday schedules can make it easy to forget medications, blood sugar checks, or meals. Setting reminders and keeping necessary supplies close by can help.

Plan ahead for gatherings. If you will be away from home, bring your medications, glucose-monitoring supplies, and any snacks recommended as part of your diabetes care plan.

Family members and Assisting Hands® caregivers can also make a difference by helping with meal preparation, providing transportation to appointments, and creating a relaxed environment where healthy choices are available without making anyone feel singled out.

Seniors should follow the guidance of their healthcare professionals, especially if they take insulin or medications that can cause low blood sugar. With thoughtful planning, a little flexibility, and support from loved ones, seniors can enjoy the season's traditions while keeping their health a priority.

Staying steady in cold weather

As temperatures drop and winter weather arrives, everyday activities can present new challenges for older adults. Icy sidewalks, wet entryways, bulky clothing, and shorter daylight hours can increase the risk of falls. A few simple precautions can help seniors remain safe and comfortable throughout the colder months.

Remove leaves, snow, and ice from sidewalks and entryways. Arrange for someone to help with snow removal when needed. Wear well-fitting shoes or boots with non-slip soles, even when stepping outside for just a moment.

Dress for warmth. Multiple lightweight layers can provide warmth without restricting movement. Avoid long or loose clothing that could become a tripping hazard.

Take your time. Rushing increases the chance of losing balance. Allow extra time when getting dressed, moving around the house, or heading out for an appointment.

Staying active is important, even when the weather makes outdoor activities difficult. Gentle indoor movement, when appropriate for an individual's abilities, can help maintain strength and balance throughout the season.

CLICK HERE
TO FIND A LOCATION NEAR YOU

JUST FOR FUN: Winter Wonderland



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CANDLE
CANDY CANE
CAROLS
CHRISTMAS
DECORATIONS
EGGNOG
ELF ON A SHELF
FIREPLACE
FROSTY
GINGERBREAD
HANNUKAH
HOLIDAY
HOT CHOCOLATE
ICICLE
JINGLE BELLS
MISTLETOE
NUTCRACKER
ORNAMENTS
POINSETTIA
PRESENTS
REINDEER
SANTA CLAUS
SLEIGH
SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN
STOCKING
TINSEL
UGLY SWEATER
WINTER
WREATH

simply Delicious



Hearty Vegetable Soup

Prep: 25 Min. Cook: 1 hr. 20 min.; Yield: 16 Servings

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 4 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 large green pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 cups chopped cabbage
- 2 cups frozen cut green beans (about 8 ounces)
- 2 cups frozen peas (about 8 ounces)
- 1 cup frozen corn (about 5 ounces)
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 teaspoons chicken bouillon granules
- 1-1/2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 4 cups water
- 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups V8 juice



Directions

- In a stockpot, heat oil over medium-high heat; saute carrots, onions, celery and green pepper until crisp-tender. Add garlic; cook and stir 1 minute. Stir in remaining ingredients; bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat; simmer, covered, until vegetables are tender, 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Remove bay leaf.

Amish Sugar Cookies

Prep: 10 Min. Bake: 10 Min.; Yield: About 5 dozen

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup canola oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375°. In a large bowl, beat the butter, oil and sugars. Beat in eggs until well blended. Beat in vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and cream of tartar; gradually add to creamed mixture.
- Drop by small teaspoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake until lightly browned, 8-10 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.

– courtesy of tasteofhome.com