



December 17, 2021 Reading Time 6 min

CARING FOR AGING PARENTS: 8 TOP TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Caring for aging parents during the holiday season can be rewarding and stressful.

For one, it's a time for continuing family traditions for the kids. But it can also be draining, especially for caregivers.

While we're slowly easing back to how things were, new COVID-19 variants pose a new threat.

So how can we continue caring for aging parents during the holidays?

Today I'll be sharing the best tips to help you celebrate safely.

Is it safe to visit my elderly parents now?

Our family has always looked forward to celebrating the holidays.

But since COVID-19, it's been a challenge to get everyone together without the fear of being sick.

As more people are vaccinated, or have natural immunity from previous exposure, things seem to be improving.

And yet there are new variants popping up with increasing frequency. Everyone may be wondering, is it safe to visit my elderly parents now?

It's understandable for us to want things to get back to normal.

But we have to accept that we will likely never be without some variant of COVID-19.



The good news is that there are several ways to enjoy the holidays more safely.

CDC has shared recommendations on how we can minimize risks and the spread.

If you are not vaccinated but would like to be, you can find one near you here.

If you are ill, or have symptoms of fever, cough, colds or flu, stay away from other people until your symptoms have resolved.

If you are have low immunity, or at high risk of infection such as during chemo treatments, please carefully consider the holiday events you attend.

8 Practical Tips on Caring for Aging Parents for the Holidays

Now lets talk about the best tips on caring for aging parents during holiday celebrations.

Family and holiday traditions are important parts of our lives, especially for the kids.

That's why we should be continuing these so our kids will have more memories to cherish as they grow.

The question is, how do you make the celebrations easier during a pandemic? And how can you keep vulnerable safe and healthy while still having fun?

Here are my top tips...

Plan Ahead

It helps to make preparations early on if you're planning to get together this Christmas or New Year's Eve.

Send invites as soon as possible and let everyone know the size of the guest list so they can decide if attending is right for them.

Early planning also helps get your event on the calendar so there is less chance that your loved ones will have a conflicting event.

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Keep the circle small if frail elderly are involved.

Keep in mind that you're celebrating with the loved ones you are caring for, they may be at higher risk.

If so, it's a safer option to keep the celebrations with them small. Consider limiting the attendees to immediate family members.

It makes sense to send RSVPs, so you will have an accurate idea who will be attending.

And make sure to send reminders to everyone attending to monitor their symptoms and stay home if they are feeling ill.

Take standard precautions such as hand washing. Covering your nose and mouth in the event of a sneeze or cough.

These are the simple things that we should be doing all the time to protect our young children and the elderly.

Communicate often



One of the best things that happened in our time is the ease of communication.

Nowadays we all have handheld devices and a means to connect with each other from anywhere in the world.

It's now easier to keep up to date with everyone. Messaging apps like Viber and Whatsapp make it more convenient to talk.

If you don't have a chat group with the family yet, then it's time to make one.

Here you can plan and assign tasks much easier and give updates in real-time.

Set up phone calls and video calls to keep everyone in sync. And if changes or challenges arise, make sure to keep the chat updated as well.

Decide on which family traditions to continue

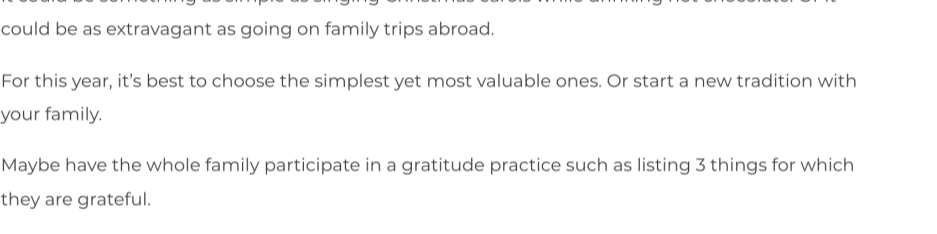
One of the best things about the holidays is that you get to share family traditions with the young ones.

It could be something as simple as singing Christmas carols while drinking hot chocolate. Or it could be as extravagant as going on family trips abroad.

For this year, it's best to choose the simplest yet most valuable ones. Or start a new tradition with your family.

Maybe have the whole family participate in a gratitude practice such as listing 3 things for which they are grateful.

Another option is packing gift boxes for a charity such as Operation Christmas Child.



It's also a great time to introduce new holiday activities with seniors and kids.

There are tons of activities that you can enjoy at home, like arts and crafts.

You can start with recreating family recipes to serve on Christmas eve. Or take a look at old photos and reminisce by the fireplace.

What matters most is that you are spending time and creating memories with the elders and the kids and keeping them safe as well.

Check out some indoor holiday activities for seniors here.

Simplify your plans

The holidays are usually stressful, but that doesn't mean it has to be for you.

One good thing about the pandemic is it taught us how to simplify and minimize.

As a host, you don't have to do things by yourself. And you also don't need to make sure everything is perfect for your family to have fun.

Some people's love language is service and food. If you feel like preparing a feast for your family, go ahead. But it's also okay to relax during the holidays.

There's nothing wrong with ordering takeout or preparing pre-cooked meals. And there's also nothing wrong with prioritizing peace and rest.

Keep things simple and minimal so you can spend time with your family too.

Take note that there's a higher percentage of strokes happening during the holidays. So be careful with the food you also prepare at this time.

Go for high fiber, low-fat options. And if you must prepare something sinful, make sure to balance it out with healthier food as well.

Check out these simple and easy holiday recipes you can prepare for your family.

Be open to virtual get-togethers

Keeping parties small doesn't mean setting other family members apart.

You can still host online gatherings using tools like Zoom, Skype, and Google Meets.

Set a specific time for an online meeting and invite all family members especially those in other locations.

You can play online games like Pictionary where everyone can take turns guessing. Or try Name that Tune to make it more interesting.

Make it more fun by playing Secret Santa and sending out packages and gifts to be opened on Christmas eve.

Get more ideas for virtual games and activities here.

Send gift packs and care packages to family



There's been the 'great resignation' since the pandemic began in 2020.

So many people have lost opportunities or resigned from work. And not everyone has coped ever since.

Now is the best time to check in with other family members that might need help.

Get in touch with aunts, uncles, and other grandparents who might need it the most. You can even use this time to pool funds with others who are willing to share.

It doesn't have to be grand. It needs to have the necessities like food packages, toiletries, and other items to keep them warm.

Here are some care package ideas for seniors you can choose from

Don't wait until next year

One thing the pandemic and lock downs have taught us is need for human interaction. Especially for our aging loved ones.

Isolation leads to significant mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression and speeds up the course of progressive diseases such as alzheimer's and dementia.

Be sure to check in with your loved ones as often as possible and spend quality time together. This may be time you never get back.

There are so many ways to celebrate together even if you're miles away. Keep that in mind and keep yourself and your family safe and healthy this holiday season!

Conclusion

Caring for our aging parents can be challenging especially during the holidays. They can be extra sensitive during this time.

And the pandemic is not making it any easier.

Thankfully there are more options nowadays for our family to feel loved. All we have to do is be creative and think outside the box.

How are celebrating the holidays and caring for your aging parents? Share your tips below.

That's all for today.

Take care, keep mom safe and have a great day!

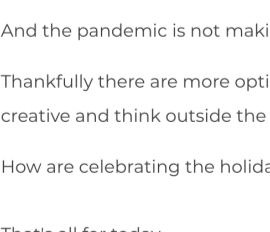
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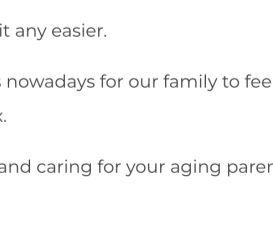
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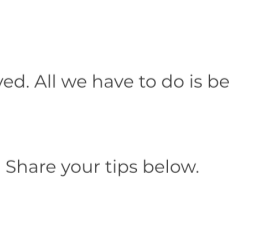
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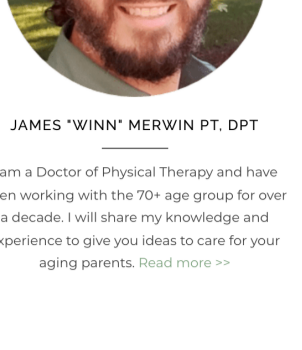
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JAMES 'WINN' MERWIN PT, DPT

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