

# Practicing Self Care During the Holiday

Laurette Hayden, LMFT

Epilepsy Foundation Greater Los Angeles  
12/10/17

<b>* CHALLENGES *</b>	<b>* SUGGESTIONS *</b>
<b>STRESS / ANXIETY DEPRESSION</b>	
Your own expectations	Have realistic expectations, try setting intention for each gathering/activity that will promote a positive experience
The expectations of others	Recognize these might be different from yours
Social anxiety	Relaxation techniques, an exit strategy, a graceful "no,"
Family (dys)functions	Anticipate family patterns, plan self-protection, respond instead of reacting, rehearse new strategies beforehand
Loneliness	Common during holidays. Reach out, contact friends & family, volunteer, stay active, rest, initiate enjoyable solo activities
Associations with past holidays	Recognize, reflect, perhaps reframe, embrace traditions and/or create new ones
<b>FINANCIAL CONCERNS</b>	
Gift-giving pressure	Create personal handmade gifts, consider gifts only for the children, "Elephant in the Room" gift game
Overspending	Prepare holiday budget, plan ahead, book travel in advance for better rates
<b>FOOD / DIET</b>	
Ketogenic, Revised Atkins, etc.	Prepare your specialized food, bring with you
Food Triggers	Be especially mindful, choose alternatives

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<b>ALCOHOL</b>	
Interactions with AED meds	Be mindful of alcohol's affect on medications, ask doctor/pharmacist when taking new meds
Triggers	Consider alternatives
"Invisible" alcohol (cider, eggnog, holiday grog)	Ask if you're not sure
<b>SLEEP</b>	
Trigger	Be especially aware if you are neglecting sleep
Distractions (noise, new location)	Try to create boundaries, ask for what you need
"Getting it all done"	Protect sleep time, don't wrap gifts at midnight
Travel / Time Zones	Anticipate, accommodate time changes
<b>OVERWHELM</b>	
Overstimulation	Protect yourself, breathe, meditate, remove yourself from situations
Distracted from health priorities	Plan ahead, set doctor appointments in advance (expect end-of-year appointment challenges), review insurance coverage, be aware of deadlines
Over-scheduling	Allow yourself "time outs," the graceful "no"
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>	
Advantages	Can help you connect / re-connect with others, assist in plan-making, provide creative ideas for holidays
Disadvantages	Can increase sense of isolation. Consider "unplugging," if only temporarily

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<b>TRAVEL</b>	
Disclosure re: seizures	Ask others (family travel companions, friends, airline seat mates) for support as needed
Unexpected delays	Build in extra travel time to stay on schedule and minimize stress. If delayed, try to relax and consider this part of your journey!
Accessing enough medication	Anticipate need, "vacation override," bring extra in case of unexpected delays
Transporting meds	Carry-on baggage, divide medication in baggage, include Rx and/or letter from doctor for meds and/or devices
Taking medication	Stay on schedule, shift dose times according to time zone changes
Travel vaccinations	Consult with your epileptologist or neurologist regarding possible contraindications with AEDs and potential side effects
Flight: Dehydration / Jet lag	Hydrate, move/stretch if long flight
Altitude in different location	Consider if your seizures are triggered by locations at higher elevations
Medical / Travel Insurance	Explore medical / travel plans for international coverage if traveling internationally

***PRACTICE SELF CARE & ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAYS!***

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