

Ways to Prepare for a Different Kind of Holiday

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Although we have had months to prepare and we should be ready for a holiday season during a pandemic, we are not ready. How do you prepare for something you have never done before? How do you plan to deviate from your tradition and stay apart? This year is likely the exact opposite of how you typically plan for the holidays. However, because it is about protecting your loved ones, this is how it needs to be.

That is not to say that the holidays will not still be meaningful or that you must give up all your traditions. However, it is important to realize that this year will require creativity, flexibility, and acceptance. Things will be different and there will be more distance required than we are used to.

To start, it is important to shift your focus from the things that you can't do this year to the things that you can do or that remain unchanged this holiday season. Although there are many things that we will still be able to safely do this holiday season, it doesn't cure the inevitable hard choices, things that may be missed, and a general feeling of loss.

When thinking about how you plan to spend and share the holidays this year it is going to require more planning and consideration than years prior. Now is the time to start thinking ahead and make the plan that works best for you and your family. It also means that now is the time to also start considering hard conversations that will need to happen. What is best for you and your family may not align with what is best for others you usually spend time with during the holiday season. That is not to say that one way is better than the other, just that expectations will need to be set.

Assessing the risks is going to be a large part of the holidays. Thinking about the health and safety of your family will require thought about risk factors that we have never before had to consider. Those risk factors are not a one-size-fits-all process and considerations will be different for everyone. Your personal comfort level and risk factors combined with the type or size of the activity or gathering will dictate what is best for you and your family this holiday season.

Should you choose to gather in person this year, consider trying things like limiting the size and duration of the gathering, having increased ventilation in closed spaces, wearing masks when possible, and limiting what is shared.

Once you have decided how to spend the holidays, the planning is not done. This year you must also think about how to spend the time after your holiday activities. Depending on the activities you participated in, it may be responsible to quarantine or get tested before gathering or resuming your normal activities.

For more information on ways to safely celebrate this year, you visit the Center for Disease Control recommendations here <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#thanksgiving>