

Words about Wellness

UNC DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION

Navigating the Holidays in the Time of COVID



December 2020 “Words About Wellness” is brought to you by:

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The December holidays can be stressful at the best of times. Preparations for the holidays add to our workload and family dynamics may make impending gatherings less than completely joyful—despite what Hallmark movies infer. Despite the challenges, we still look forward to getting together with our families and maintaining the traditions we have put together over the years. Those traditions—big family meals and family music jams in my case—are just not possible for most of us this year. After acknowledging the grief we feel over their loss, it is time to figure out what we CAN do to transition our family holiday celebration to the current circumstances.

Our temptation would be to use technology to connect with one another and try to reproduce what we have lost. That can be done—you can plan cacophonous Zoom caroling and eating feasts. But, with the pressures expected on Zoom and the marked differences in our experiences overall, perhaps an entirely new plan is in order. In the spirit of wellness, here are a few ideas:

- 1) Make an appointment each day with one family member or friend for a phone call while walking. Think about all those steps you can get in while keeping connected!
- 2) Try a new recipe for a healthy meal (whatever that means to you). Place it artfully on a plate and take a photo to send to your family and friends.
- 3) Create a Holiday video highlighting important moments during the year to share with friends and family. There are several free or inexpensive platforms you can use, including PowerPoint.
- 4) Start a family funny poem. Each person or family group can add to it and it can be recited on December 26th or another day with meaning to the family.
- 5) Choose a yoga video that is gentle enough for most family members or a meditation video. Encourage each member to check it out and compare notes.
- 6) For the pet lovers among us, we can have a competition for who can make the best pet treats (prettiest, smelliest, most appealing to pets, etc.) I know my dogs would love that one!
- 7) Put together a list of your family’s favorite movies. Ask at least two family members to provide a brief review for each one.

Technology is great, but when it is not working well, it can cause more stress rather than less. Alternatives to Zoom meetings might be just what we need, particularly if they get us out of our chairs and exercising either our bodies or our right brains.