

02 H-3 Monthly Newsletter

December
2018

December is:

- Jesus Christ's Birthday Celebration – December 25th
- Coping with Caregiving During the Holiday Season
- National Handwashing Awareness Week - Dec. 2nd thru Dec. 8th
- National Influenza Vaccination Week – Dec. 2nd thru Dec. 8th
- Safe Toys & Gifts Month



In His Service,



H-3 Ministry

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. *Matthew 1:18-25*

The Real Meaning of Christmas

It's that time of year again. December has come and with it all the joys of Christmas. But what is the real meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts under the tree, the lights in the windows, the cards in the mail, turkey dinners with family and friends, snow in the yard, stockings hanging in the living room, and shouts of "Merry Christmas" to those who pass us in the streets? Is this really Christmas?

For many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don't have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Many are saddened at Christmastime when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons. Turkey dinners may be only a wish and not a reality for some.

Yet, Christmas can be a season of great joy. It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. You see, Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before. The star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this special child.

SEE Luke 2:4-19

Why did He come? Why did God send His son to this sometimes cruel and hard world? He sent Jesus to us so that one day, He would grow up to become a very important part of history. His story (history) is one of truth, love, and hope. It

brought salvation to all of us. Without Jesus, we would all die in our sins.

Jesus was born so one day the price could be paid for the things we have done that are wrong. The Bible says that all have sinned. We are all born with a sin nature. We do things that do not please God. Through the sins of Adam and Eve, we have all inherited that sin nature. We need to have that removed. The only way is through Jesus. Jesus came so He could die on the cross for ALL of our sins. If we believe that Jesus died for our sins, we can ask Him to come into our hearts and forgive us. Then, we are clean and made whole. We can know that heaven is a place where we can go to when this life is over.

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." 1 John 1:9 (NLT)

We can truly be happy at Christmas! No matter what may be happening, we can know that we are His children. We then become sons and daughters of God. Heaven will be our home one day.

Look at Christmas in a new way this year. This is the year to invite Jesus into your heart. You will then have a "Merry Christmas." The joy and peace you will receive will last all year as you look to God for all your needs to be met.

Jesus Is The Reason For The Season! Rejoice!

Best Wishes for a Blessed, Happy, Healthy, & Safe Christmas Season filled with Love, Hope, Joy & Peace!





10 TIPS FOR COPING WITH CAREGIVING BLUES DURING THE HOLIDAYS



The holiday season is filled with anxiety and stress for most folks, even if it's good stress. Expectations of a "perfect" holiday, fed by advertising and media coverage, can contribute to depression for those who don't feel their holiday is measuring up. Add caregiving for elderly family members to this seasonal hoopla, and the result can be overwhelming negative stress. How can caregivers cope with the demands of creating a nice holiday environment for their loved ones and stay true to themselves?

Many people suffer from "holiday blues," even without the stress of caregiving. The shorter days with less sunlight affect some people. The expectation - often unfounded except in advertising and fiction - that everyone else is having a perfect holiday while you are not, can bring on depression severe enough that there are often increased suicide rates during the holidays.

If we add the significant obligations of caregiving to an existing risk of holiday blues, we can have a recipe for trouble. During this season, caregivers need to be especially vigilant in recognizing their own, perhaps unrealistic, expectations for a "perfect" holiday, as well as the possibly excessive expectations of others.

Tradition frequently plays a starring role in holiday stress, since many family traditions date back years, if not generations. Sometimes, it can seem as though not following through on every traditional holiday food, activity and decoration would be slap in the face to the whole family. Some caregivers are responsible for elders and children at the same time, a situation so common these days that these folks in the middle have been designated the "sandwich generation." We have children who want each holiday done like the one before because they are used to routine. We have elders who say, "This is the way we've always done it." The caregiver in the middle can feel overwhelmed.

What can caregivers do to minimize this stress and have at least a chance at *enjoying* the holidays?

1. Put first things first. If you've always felt depressed during the holidays, caregiving won't make things easier. If you get depressed from the lack of sunlight in the winter months, see your doctor. There are therapies that can help this syndrome, which is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). If you don't have a problem with the sunlight, but still suffer seasonal depression, talking with a counselor to learn to cope with this depression is often a good idea.
2. If you have always enjoyed the holidays, but now find them overwhelming because of too many demands on your time, you will need to learn to simplify the season. Yes, that will mean disappointing a few people, perhaps elders and children alike, but simplification is often the only choice you have, if you are to remain somewhat sane.
3. Learn to detach from the negative feedback you may get from others because of changes you are making. Detaching simply means that you recognize the other person's feelings, but you will not allow yourself to react or be controlled by their feelings without considering your own needs, as well. You set boundaries by telling others what you can and can't do. You look at the situation with open eyes, perhaps get some feedback from people you think can help you, and then make your own decisions. Acknowledging your loved ones' views, and telling them you love them, but simply can't do it all, generally helps. If your mom says, "But we've always done it that way," you say, "Yes, we have, but now our holiday has to change a little, since our lives have changed." If your kids lay on the guilt because you can't bake every kind of cookie they want, let them know that you want to please them, but that your time is limited now, so they can help you by being flexible. If you offer to let them help you, they may feel part of the decision, rather than brushed off. The main idea is that you don't react to their negativity. Generally, when you stop reacting, other people will calm down.
4. Use music as a soothing tool for all. If you have elders in nursing homes, bring them a CD player and CDs so they can play old songs they enjoy. Around the house, play Christmas tunes your kids like, but don't forget your own needs. If you have some favorite holiday tunes on CDs, play those too. However, if you get a sick feeling every time you enter a mall because the Christmas music reminds you of all you have to do, then play other types of music at home. Do consider music of some kind. Classical music can be very therapeutic, religious music helps many, and old rock and roll or country songs may give you a boost.
5. Soothing light can help most people relax. Obviously, candles aren't allowed in nursing homes and likely aren't a good idea for elders or kids. But there are many softly lit holiday decorations you can safely use, or get some indirect lamps for atmosphere. Soft lights, combined with good music, can help calm nearly anyone, including a caregiver. Try it while you bake treats, decorate your home or the elders' homes, or do other holiday duties.
6. Meditation can be as simple as getting up early or going to bed late. The idea is to have some quiet time for yourself. Some people like guided meditation, where music or soothing words on CD or DVD help them relax in a progressive manner. Other people prefer going outside, maybe to a park or sitting near water, if possible, to enjoy natural calm. Some folks concentrate on their breathing pattern while they repeat one soothing word. This helps them calm their overactive brain. There's no right or wrong way to meditate, but numerous studies have shown meditation can have a healthy effect on mood, as well as physical wellbeing. Also, try to eat right and exercise. This is extra hard during the holiday season, but you can feel better if you treat your body right.
7. Ask your spouse, a friend or relative to take over some of your duties for a time. It's amazing how many of us think we have to do everything ourselves, even though others would help if we only asked them. When we don't ask for help, people often don't know we need help, or else they simply don't know what to do.
8. Take a trip down memory lane. Remember your parents when they were young and healthy. Remember your children when they were tiny. Remember the good times before these difficult times. When you do that, you'll likely find a better balance in your life, because you'll start to recognize that life is cyclical, and better times will come again.
9. Allow yourself to feel the pain of your aging parents' losses. As elders age and grow frail, we're often saddened by their physical and psychological pain. The holidays throw a spotlight on all the things they can no longer enjoy. This pain is real. Allow yourself to feel it. Write it down. Talk about it with other caregivers, a religious leader, or a good friend. Get it out. It's natural, human and okay to feel the loss. If you feel bitter or angry, say so. Get it all out and don't allow shame to enter into the equation. You have a right to all of your feelings.
10. Let go of perfection. It's likely that all of those holidays you remember as being so wonderful really weren't that perfect. Every human being looks at events differently. Time skews our memories. Life wasn't perfect thirty years ago, twenty years ago or ten years ago. It's far from perfect now. Do your best with what you have. Take care of yourself along with the others, and your holidays will be as good as they can be. Let that be good enough.

Celebrate National Handwashing Awareness Week

This week (December 2nd through 8th) is National Handwashing Awareness Week! It doesn't matter whether you've been celebrating for days or just learned about this important holiday—there's still time to spread the word and promote healthy habits in your practice and your community. To help you make the most of the new few days, we put together a few frequently asked questions, along with their answers.

What is National Handwashing Awareness Week?

According to the American Cleaning Institute, the goal of this week is to “decrease the spread of infectious diseases by empowering individuals to educate and help protect their communities.” Washing your hands is one of the most effective and simple ways to accomplish this goal, hence the holiday!

Why is this event held the first week in December?

December is a busy time for most people. Between the rush of the holidays, the end-of-the-year excitement, and the turn in the weather, it's easy to become run down and exhausted—perfect conditions for illness to take hold. When your system is compromised, it's extra important to stay healthy by avoiding germs, and the best way to do that is by washing your hands. By keeping up with these good habits, you can easily decrease your risk of flus, viruses, and the common cold.

When should you wash your hands?

Most people are good about washing their hands when they use the restroom or are about to prepare food, but there are many other moments throughout your day in which a good washing will go a long way. For example, if you're caring for someone who is sick, about to or just finished treating a wound, cleaning up after a child or changing a diaper, in contact with animals or their waste, or just took out the trash, you should absolutely wash your hands. All of these everyday activities could spread germs and disease, so make sure to wash up!

What is the best way to wash your hands?

Think you know everything about handwashing? Think again! The Center for Disease Control outlines the five steps to proper handwashing. They are as follows:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

It's National Influenza Vaccination Week!

CDC established National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) in 2005 to highlight the importance of continuing flu vaccination through the holiday season and beyond. NIVW 2018 is scheduled for December 2-8, 2018

Flu vaccination coverage estimates from past seasons have shown that few people get vaccinated against influenza after the end of November.

- CDC and its partners choose December for NIVW to remind people that even though the holiday season has begun, it is not too late to get a flu vaccine.
- As long as flu viruses are spreading and causing illness, vaccination should continue throughout flu season in order to protect as many people as possible against flu.
- Vaccination efforts should continue through the holiday season and beyond. It's not too late to vaccinate.
- Getting vaccinated later can still be beneficial and should be done as soon as possible before flu begins spreading in your community.
- Even if you haven't yet been vaccinated and have already gotten sick with flu, you can still benefit from vaccination since the flu vaccine protects against three or four different flu viruses (depending on which flu vaccine you get).

Flu isn't a “bad cold” and can result in serious health problems (complications), such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations. Flu can sometimes even lead to death.

- Most people who get flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop serious flu complications
- During the 2017-2018 flu season, CDC estimates flu caused:
 - 49 million flu illnesses – more than the combined populations of Texas and Florida
 - 960,000 flu hospitalizations – more than the number of staffed hospital beds in the United States
 - 79,000 deaths – more than the average number of people who attend the Super Bowl each year
- All people are at risk for serious flu-related complications and certain groups are at higher risk
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease or lung disease, and people 65 years and older.

DECEMBER IS



In recent years, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has created a robust toy safety system, by requiring testing by independent, third party testing laboratories around the world; enforcing stringent lead and phthalates limits for toys; imposing some of the most stringent toy standards in the world; and stopping violative and dangerous toys at the ports and in the marketplace before they reach children's hands. These combined efforts continue to foster the confidence of American families as they prepare to shop for toys this holiday season.

Safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season:

Balloons

Children can choke or suffocate on deflated or broken balloons. Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than eight years old. Discard broken balloons immediately.

Small balls and other toys with small parts

For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.

Scooters and other riding toys

Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast, and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be worn properly at all times and they should be sized to fit.

Magnets

High-powered magnet sets are dangerous and should be kept away from children. Whether marketed for children or adults, building and play sets with small magnets should also be kept away from small children.

Once gifts are open:

- Immediately discard plastic wrapping or other toy packaging before the wrapping and packaging become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings.
- Battery charging should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to young children. Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any mechanism to prevent overcharging.



resources this issue

Resources: <https://www1.cbn.com/devotions/real-meaning-christmas>
<http://www.eldercarelink.com/Other-Resources/Caregiving-Support/10-tips-for-coping-with-caregiving-blues-during-holidays.htm>
<https://www.normgroup.org/celebrate-national-handwashing-awareness-week/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/nivw/about.htm>
<https://child-familyservices.org/december-is-national-safe-toys-and-gifts-month/>