Enjoying Thanksgiving with MS

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Top Tips for Thanksgiving with MS

The holidays are supposed to be a time of joy and happiness, but Thanksgiving can be something of a nightmare when you have multiple sclerosis. There are many factors that can make Thanksgiving a struggle, however, there are some steps you can take to make your holiday more enjoyable.

Keeping Up With Conversation

Problem: Too many people talking at once. If you're having cognitive issues, it can be stressful when you can't keep up with a conversation. When there are several people participating in a discussion, it may be too much you to keep up with.

Solution: Avoid the situation by finding a quiet spot where you can hold more intimate conversations.

Hearing Yourself Think

Problem: Lots of noise. It may be difficult for you to maintain your train of thought in a noisy room. The noise could be the television, people cheering or talking loudly, or annoying music in the background.

Solution: You may want to step outside or into a quieter room to collect your thoughts. You can also politely ask your host to turn music or the television down a bit, and move to a seat further from the speakers.

Avoiding Bugs

Problem: Risk of infection. You're more likely to be exposed to cold and flu bugs at a family gathering or other party. This is especially true in November. Relapses can occur if you get an illness that leads to respiratory complications, so you want to avoid getting sick at all costs.

Solution: Be sure to get vaccinated against respiratory illness. Carry hand sanitizer with you and use it often, and be sure to practice good hand washing.

Losing Sleep

Problem: Losing sleep over the holidays. Though most people have trouble with sleep during holidays, when you have MS you do not need this additional stressor contributing to your fatigue.

Solution: Go to bed at a good time, perhaps earlier than normal. Take small naps as needed, but not so many that it affects your sleep at night.

Stress

Problem: Holiday stressors. The very thought of shopping and cooking for Thanksgiving can send your stress levels through the roof. It can be very trying to navigate through an overcrowded store full of weary people, and if you're hosting dinner your "to do" list is likely a mile long.

Solution: Plan to have all of your shopping done way before Thanksgiving, or order online and have it all delivered to your home. Prepare as many dishes as you can ahead of time, and ask everybody to bring a side dish to lighten your load.

Temperature Woes

Problem: Getting overheated or too cold. Many people with MS are sensitive to temperature and this can bring on a flare-up.

Solution: Keep from slaving over a hot stove. See if someone else can cook on the stove for you while you prepare food that is at room temperature, like salads.

Overdoing It

Problem: Doing too much: When you battle fatigue on a regular basis it is important to not overdo it, but Thanksgiving preparations and events can make you forget that.

Solution: You will need to pick and choose what you can do and let someone else take the rest. And don't sweat the little things. If the housework is not finished, don't worry about it. Your friends or family probably won't even notice the dust you're worrying about.