THE MESSENGER

From RIVERBEND SENIOR LIVING *and* WILLOW RIDGE HEALTHCARE

November/December 2020

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If It's "Zoom for the Holidays" This Year

These days, families have been having some tough conversations about their holiday plans. Some families believe they can safely gather if they take precautions. They might be planning to create family "bubbles" by pledging to quarantine for the recommended amount of time before they get together.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strongly advises families to ask these questions as they make the decision:

- Would the setting and duration of the gathering be safe?
- How many people would be attending?
- What methods of transportation would guests be taking?
- Would guests be committed to wearing a mask and proper social distancing?
- What is the level of COVID-19 in the town of the gathering, and the communities from which guests would be traveling?
- Would there be vulnerable older guests and those with health conditions that put them at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19?

Many families have made the hard decision to skip the traditional in-person gatherings this year. If your family has decided this is for the best, chances are you are planning a virtual celebration to bring everyone together, using Zoom, Facebook Messenger, FaceTime or another video platform. But it's important to remember that older family members may be at a disadvantage in this medium.

Here are some tips:

Well before the holiday, help familiarize your loved one with the platform the family will be using.

Assign someone who is in your loved one's bubble or who can safely be in their home to help with setup. Be sure the setup is user-friendly for older adults, and suitable for any vision and hearing impairment your loved one might have. While you're at it, help them adjust their camera—everyone likes to be at their Zoom best!

Provide some test runs ahead of the big event.

A few low-pressure chats at your loved one's own pace will build confidence as they become comfortable with this way of communication.

Why Does Time Seem to Fly in Our Older Years?

"The holidays are here already? Seems like we just took down the Christmas tree last week!" Time seems to pass faster as we grow older. Why is that? Scientists continue to unravel the mysteries of the perception of time—and older brains are offering some clues. Duke University School of Medicine professor Adrian Bejan says this phenomenon has to do with the way our brains process images. "People are often amazed at how much they remember from days that seemed to last forever in their youth," said Bejan. "It's not that their experiences were much deeper or more meaningful, it's just that they were being processed in rapid fire. Days seemed to last longer in your youth because the young mind receives more images during one day than the same mind in old age."

This isn't necessarily due to any deterioration in older brains; instead, says Bejan, our brains become more complex with age, which is why it takes longer for images to process.

FDA: All That Glitters Isn't Edible

Sparkly cupcakes, cookies and doughnuts have been all the rage these days, and we're likely to see some pretty, shimmery treats over the holidays. But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reminds us that not all baking glitters are meant for consumption. "Companies that make edible glitters and dusts are required by law to include a list of ingredients on the label," the FDA reports. "Common ingredients in edible glitter or dust include sugar, acacia (gum arabic), maltodextrin, cornstarch, and color additives specifically approved for food use, including mica-based pearlescent pigments and FD&C colors such as FD&C Blue No. 1."

Is the glitter you bought online or at a craft store safe to eat? The FDA says the product label should say "edible." "Non-toxic" does not mean edible. If the label doesn't have a list of ingredients, that's another indicator that you shouldn't use the product directly on food. So admire the sparkle, but check the label first!

Check us out online for more!

Be sure to visit our online edition at ***rphmessenger.com*** to download the solution to our November wordfind, medication safety tips, and healthy pumpkin recipes!

Take Steps to Take More Steps

Are you aiming for 10,000 steps a day? Maybe 5,000?
Here are 20 ideas to help us reach our goal.

CHART
CHILDREN
CLEANING
DANCING
DOG WALKING
ERRANDS
EXERCISE VIDEO
FITNESS TRACKER
GARDENING
HIKING
LAPS
MARCH IN PLACE
PACING
PEDOMETER
SHOPPING
STAIRS
STANDING
TREADMILL
VACUUMING
WALKING CHAT

K J F P D L C P E R C J D L O
G D I E W C H A R T E D Q E A
A G T D S T A I R S Y W D Q W
K C N O S F M T A P H I L L A
X H E M P H M R N N V H L Z L
Z I S E U B O Q D E N I V L K
T L S T D L A P S V M K A Q I
W D T E A Y D I P D G I C N N
Z R R R E N C A A I C N U R G
Y E A G A R D E N I N G U P C
O N C S E T R I G C Q G M A H
W B K X U T X F N W I U I C A
C L E A N I N G M G I N N I T
M A R C H I N P L A C E G N E
D V Y J D O G W A L K I N G T

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Zoom Holidays (cont.)

Adapting holiday traditions for a virtual gathering.

Just talking, sharing, catching up and seeing each other's faces will be meaningful. Or plan some creative activities ahead of time. Have a holiday memories exchange where everyone can share a recollection of holidays past. Create a slideshow ahead of time with old holiday photos. Have a holiday mask exchange, or a socially distanced holiday songfest. And if your family's gift exchange is usually chaotic, slow things down. Grandparents will especially enjoy seeing the children open those presents they so lovingly selected.

Then, as we do in person, you might break up into smaller groups for other events. Those who wish might attend a faith service online. Sports fans can watch a game together. Shopaholics might hit the online sales on Black Friday or the day after Christmas.

A note for families whose loved ones live in a skilled nursing facility or assisted living community:

If your loved one lives in a senior living community, staff may be able to help, but keep in mind that this is a very busy time. Staff will be working to create special, safe holiday events for residents. It might be better to schedule your virtual family visit a few days before or after the holiday. Or, make it the "Twelve Days of Christmas Calls," with family members scheduling phone calls to keep your loved one feeling included though the season, even as in-person visits aren't feasible.

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