



Getting through holidays when coping with infertility

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Most big holidays are celebrated with a focus on family. If you are struggling to have a family, or have more children, holidays may be especially painful times. Thinking about how to be gentle with yourself can help. Here are some specific suggestions:

If you are buying gifts, do so online or at small shops and avoid malls that are thronged with families.

Limit how many holiday gatherings you attend. Practice saying, "Thank you for the invitation but I will not be able to attend." You do not have to explain or defend.

Instead of generating anticipatory anxiety by saying to yourself "what if she asks me.....?", spend some time deciding how you will actually answer. Rehearse!

If you know a baby will be at the event, decide in advance if you will hold it or not (if offered). Would it comfort you or torture you?

If you are trying to conceive with a partner, agree on a "get me out of here" signal in case the event becomes too overwhelming. This might mean leaving early or even just taking a walk for some fresh air. Helping in the kitchen can also be a great "time out."

Give yourself permission to go away for the holiday or to start your own family traditions that may include staying home this year.

If attending religious services are important for your holidays, consider doing so on a college campus where the focus won't be on the children in the congregation.

Consider taking a break from fertility treatments over the holidays.

Remember, it is normal to feel grief when one has not been able to have the children one desires. Others may not always understand, but it IS normal.

