Enjoy Your Thanksgiving While Coping With ADHD

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Top Tips for Thanksgiving With ADHD

Anything that changes your typical daily routine can aggravate your ADHD symptoms. Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and you may be concerned about dealing with this holiday. Whether you or your child lives with ADHD, there are a few simple yet effective strategies you can use to help keep symptoms in check.

If Your Child Has ADHD

The most important thing to do is to keep routine and structure in your child's life, despite the excitement of Thanksgiving festivities. A large survey found that 98% of parents of ADHD children found having a structure in their child's life (at emotional, behavioral and social levels) to be beneficial, yet only 13% said they kept a routine all year.

Family get togethers, shopping in crowded places and trips to new places are all common during Thanksgiving, and these changes can affect a child with ADHD, who already has troubles adapting to new situations and socializing. Therefore, try to maintain your child's routine during the holiday, including the medication and behavioral sessions with the therapist.

There will be inevitable changes in the environment during Thanksgiving, but you can make them easier on your child. Tell him or her in advance about the holiday and the plans you make. Remind him again just a few days before and throughout the holiday. You can use a calendar or organizer that he or she can check regularly.

If you are traveling and staying over with friends or family, makes sure you bring something familiar like a pillow, a blanket or a toy that will give your child a feeling of familiarity, and will help him sleep better and relax while being in a new place.

If you have to take your child shopping, make sure you avoid peak hours. You can also choose to get your groceries and other items from smaller, less busy stores – it will be easier to find a parking spot and the store will be less crowded.

Alternatively, order your groceries online and have them delivered, which allows you to avoid that dreaded shopping trip altogether.

If You Have ADHD

Many of the tips described above will be helpful for adults with ADHD, too. Keeping a routine is essential for you as well. Having a calendar and planning Thanksgiving well in advance will come in handy and help you to not feel overwhelmed or stressed by last minute things. It's best to make a "to do" list "first, then simplify it and focus only on the essential items.

Avoiding crowded places and sitting in traffic for long hours is also a good idea. Make sure you don’t drive if you’ve had anything to drink, remembering that your medications may interfere with alcohol.

What can you do if while visiting family members or friends and you feel irritable, or an impulse to say something you may regret? Take a few deep breaths before deciding to talk. Take breaks and rest if you feel overwhelmed at the party.

Above all, don’t stress out. You’re spending time with relatives and friends who care about you.

Happy Thanksgiving!