



Five Tips to Make the Holidays Easier

By Leslie Knopp
Comfort Keepers® Franchise Owner in Traverse City, MI

The holidays are joyous times that inspire feelings of togetherness, fond recollections of past times and hopes for the future. Gatherings with family and friends are sure to lift spirits of all ages as new memories are forged among people.

The holidays may create certain challenges for seniors. Some challenges are common while others may be unique to the individual. In any case, immense stress and upheaval may be present during times of holiday cheer. “If you have a senior in your life, whether family or friend, the following tips will help you recognize some of these challenges as well as offer ways to alleviate the stress they may cause,” says Leslie Knopp, Owner of Comfort Keepers of Northern Lower Michigan.

Cooking for Holiday Gatherings

Cooking large meals for holiday gatherings may be difficult for a senior to accomplish. The reasons may vary from not being accustomed to preparing large meals to the orchestration it involves to pull it off. Offer to help plan and prepare the meal together. This takes the pressure off of the senior of doing it all alone and provides bonding time for you both. A less stressful alternative may be to host the dinner in your own home or to ask guests to bring favorite prepared dishes to share.

Traveling to Holiday Events or Parties

Occasionally gatherings may require travel, whether in or out of town. Sometimes, driving, especially at night, may be intimidating for seniors with troubled vision. Offer to attend parties or events with seniors so they feel more comfortable about going.

Dealing with Loneliness and Isolation

Some seniors, especially those who have lost spouses or beloved friends may experience increased loneliness during the holidays. Others may become mildly depressed for the same reasons, which can lead to isolation. To help keep this from happening, make sure to visit seniors often during the holidays. Offer to take them to holiday events. Have fun baking holiday goodies together. Even helping address Christmas and Hanukah cards and chatting over a cup of warm apple cider can lift everyone’s spirits.

Presents

Giving gifts has become a hallmark of the holiday season. However, for seniors presents can cause stress for various reasons. Some may be on limited budgets and unable to purchase gifts for all family members, or they may become overwhelmed by shopping at crowded stores. Other seniors may have problems wrapping gifts because of arthritis and other medical issues. You can help by suggesting a gift drawing to alleviate cost burdens for all. Offer to join seniors on a shopping spree to assist in choosing gifts and navigating crowds. Or, ask the seniors in your life to provide you shopping lists and do the shopping for them. Encourage the use of gift bags instead of wrapping presents or plan a present wrapping afternoon so you can help.

Hire a Caregiver to Assist

The bustling holiday season is the perfect time to consider hiring a temporary caregiver to help with all elements of holiday preparations. Companies such as Comfort Keepers® offer seniors assistance in areas of light housekeeping (including putting up decorations), meal preparation, accompanying seniors to social functions or taking them shopping, and even helping with Christmas and Hanukah cards and wrapping presents. “This might be especially important if your senior loved one lives far away from family,” says. As caregivers who specialize in understanding and working with seniors, *Comfort Keepers®* can provide help and company to help your loved one have a happy holiday season.

About Comfort Keepers

With over 650 independently owned and operated locations, Comfort Keepers is a leader in in-home senior care to promote independent living. Services include companionship, meal preparation, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, incidental transportation, laundry, recreational activities, personal care and technology products. To locate a Comfort Keepers in your area go to www.comfortkeepers.com.