

ENJOYING THE HOLIDAYS

- Set realistic expectations for yourself as you are today.
- Don't overdo even if you feel well. Pick one function to attend rather than committing to too many gatherings.
- Rest before you go out to someone's house. Rest the next day.
- Bring your heating pad, ice packs, and pillows wherever you go and use them.
- Ask for help decorating, cooking, wrapping; it's more fun doing these activities with others.
- Set limits with family and friends. Practice saying "no," and say "no" when someone asks you to do something that you know will cause you pain.
- Try to take vacation time or reduce your regular schedule.
- Pay extra attention to diet and sleep.
- Fill your prescriptions early and take extras with you so you won't be caught without them.
- Set a reasonable budget. Make your life easier by shopping on the Internet. Buy gift certificates and smaller items; shop early. Some stores and garden centers will deliver at minimal cost.
- Be aware that holidays can be emotionally difficult for some, and this may reduce your available energy – tolerance levels may decrease.
- Look for miracles large and small.
- Create new rituals.
- Create a "How you can help me" list for others. For example, "If I look unwell, remind me to sit down, bring me an ice pack...."
- Focus on appreciating the small things. It's okay to sit back, listen to music, and watch everyone else go nuts while you enjoy the moment!
- Look closely at old patterns and re-evaluate what you truly "need" to accomplish during this time.
- Reframe having to slow down because of pain as a gift because it provides an opportunity to focus and appreciate what is truly important.

HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!