

HOLIDAY TIPS



Holidays can be a stressful time for everyone. Here are a few tips that can help ease the anxiety for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families.

- **Bring quiet sensory toys** or activities for the individual to use.
- **Arrive early** at gatherings, allowing the person with ASD to get used to a growing number of people.
- Ask about a **quiet location** that a person with ASD can be relocated to if they become distressed.
- Use **social stories** to prepare for parties or religious services.
- **Reward individuals** with ASD often, using words of praise or tangibles (food, toys, etc.).
- Bring someone with you for **extra support while shopping or attending events**.
- Allow the person with ASD to **wear ear plugs** or **listen to music**.
- **If attending a religious service**, inquire about how the other people attending the event can support the family.
- **Be aware of anxiety** and offer breaks as needed.
- **Practice unwrapping gifts** or give gifts unwrapped to alleviate stress.
- Difficulty with change? **Consider gradually decorating the house**.
- Prepare the individual in advance for visitors, like a **photo album** to review.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
PAAUTISM.ORG OR CONTACT
ASERT AT 877-231-4244!**

References:

Autism Speaks: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/making-happy-holidays>
Autism Society of America: <http://www.autism-society.org/holiday-tips/>

This Frequently Asked Questions Sheet was developed by the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT).