

THE HOLIDAY BLUES

For the one in every six couples struggling with infertility, the holidays can be a particularly difficult time. Holiday cheer, excited children and toddlers atop Santa's lap often leave those parents in waiting with the holiday blues. As family gatherings and children-centered activities ensue, it's a painful reminder for hopeful parents that they'll be celebrating yet another holiday season without a baby of their own.



Contributed by Mindy Berkson

For those struggling with fertility issues, don't despair. Thoughtful planning can help reduce stress and sadness and ensure the holiday season is a more joyous one. Following is a look at coping

strategies for infertile couples on how to navigate the holiday season and make it a bit more merry and bright.

Do what feels right for you

It's OK to be selective when it comes to holiday gatherings. Remember — you don't always have to say yes. Give yourself permission to avoid holiday activities with extended family that may be too painful. Don't be afraid to gracefully decline invitations where there will be lots of babies or pregnant women present.

Make it a team effort

Be on the same page with your partner when it comes to talking about your infertility. Plan ahead on how you'll respond to uninvited questions and always remember — it's up to you whether or not to discuss your fertility issues. Don't feel the need to make excuses. "No, we don't have children," is a perfectly acceptable and sufficient response.

Keep the faith

Find hope in the coming of the new year and vow to be proactive. Consider enlisting the help of a fertility consultant who can help you determine the best plan for building your family and develop a team of unbiased professionals to lead you on the right path. Retaining a sense of control and staying positive will help keep those holiday spirits up.

Seek support

There's no need to hide your sorrow or carry the burden alone, especially around the holidays. Let other people in. Talk to family and friends about how you are feeling and be direct about asking for what you need. Time alone? A shoulder to cry on? A kid-free holiday date? Try to avoid isolating yourself from those who care.

Branch out

If family festivities are too much this year, fill your holiday schedule with plans with other couples and friends who don't have kids. Be sure to stay in touch with other infertile friends and if you know of others who are experiencing similar feelings, make a connection. Reminding yourself that you are not alone always helps.

Give back

Making a positive difference in your community can be the perfect remedy. Find local volunteer opportunities, such as working at a soup kitchen or with refugees spending this holiday season

alone. Consider buying holiday gifts for a needy family. Remembering the less fortunate at this time will remind you that others are suffering too, and will put your pain in perspective.

Above all, remember to be patient and kind to yourself this holiday season. Stress will never positively affect the outcome. Remaining optimistic while being prepared to continue your fertility journey in the coming new year will remind you to stay focused on what's most important — preparing to welcome a child home.

About the author

Mindy Berkson, founder of [Lotus Blossom Consulting](http://www.LotusBlossomConsulting.com), has more than a decade of experience in the infertility field. As one of the first infertility consultancies in the United States, Lotus Blossom Consulting, LLC was founded to arm patients with information and education to make the best medical choices. Mindy has guided hundreds of intended parents all around the world through the stressful demands of the infertility process by providing professional and compassionate assistance in dealing with the emotional, physical and financial barriers involved with navigating the fertility journey. For more information, please visit www.LotusBlossomConsulting.com.