



Merry Christmas



Sensory and Sensibility

Christmas is the complete sensory experience. Everything from tree lights to street lights, sleigh bells to Salvation Army bells, busy malls and crowded houses, new foods and amazing smells.... new sensations are absolutely everywhere.

But, one person's Winter Wonderland can be sensory overload for many children and adults. The lights! The music! The bells! The people! It can be too much. Not to mention the changes in routine that come from holiday gatherings in unfamiliar places, serving weird food, with relatives that all wanting a hug or kiss ..it's enough to make a kid go chest-nuts.

Some children, especially those with neuro-behavioral conditions like ADHD, Autism and Asperger Syndrome, may need a little extra support during the Holidays. Here are a few ideas to help you and your child enjoy this beautiful and joyous but often busy and overwhelming season.

Merry Christmas !

From the TMCSEA Motor Dept.





Preparing Your Child for Holiday Events

- Give your child a schedule of events for special activities. Your child will feel calmer and safer knowing what is coming up. Let your child know which events that may take place outside or will be loud or crowded.
- Have a code word your child can use if he or she feels overwhelmed and needs a break. Giving children some control during activities that may be over stimulating for them will reduce anxiety.
- Plan Ahead! You may need to bring along ear plugs if you will be in a noisy environment. Be prepared by knowing your child's specific limitations and how you will handle them if the need arises.
- Limit holiday decorations in your home. Too many twinkling lights combined with other holiday sights and smells can be too much for children. Allow children to help you decorate so they are involved in the changes that take place in their environment.

If all else fails...skip it. What is fun for most kids just may not be fun at all for your child. If things are not working, there is no shame in heading home early. Also, avoid taking kids to loud, crowded, stuffy malls and waiting in endless store lines by *shopping online*.

www.brainbalancecenters.com





***While researching for our newsletters, I often find information in the most unexpected places. For instance, I came across a blog by a recovering addict who, facing Christmas without the numbing effects of drugs or alcohol, felt overly sensitive to everything in her environment. I felt the information still applied and included a few of her ideas.*

Tips for Coping with Sensory Overload During the Holidays

By [Olivia Pennelle](#) 12/09/16

Monitor Your Senses

HALT is a popular acronym used as a sort of recovery barometer: asking ourselves are we feeling **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired?** Any one of these senses being triggered can lead to a sense of feeling overwhelmed or feeling out of sorts.

Senses Recovery Toolbox

Sensory depletion. At least once per day I will do something to calm all of my senses. I put in ear plugs, wear an eye mask and lie still.

Restorative or Yin Yoga is great for also calming the nervous system and relaxing the body.

Sleep. Get plenty of it

Exercise. I wrap up warm and take long walks in green spaces.

Shop online. It is stress free, you don't have to lug heavy bags around, stand in lines or avoid the crowds.

Say no to holiday parties, if you want to, and know that is perfectly okay. If you do go, have an exit plan.

Manage your environment. My home is calm and not too noisy; I have a quiet room to go to if I need time out. I take earphones into the office so that I don't hear too much noise

Coping With The Twelve Days Of Christmas Sensory Overload

By [Emma Blake Corrigan](#) December 6, 2017

The best advice I can give is to plan, plan and plan some more and then lower your expectations! This advice is not just for sensory sensitive children but can help with children of all ages who may be overwhelmed by all Christmas has to offer.

♦ *Get Outside Daily*

In my opinion, MOVEMENT is the MOST important decompression tool for sensitive children.

♦ *Bedtime*

Schedule those down days for a day after a party. Be aware that if your sensory seeking disco dancer has partied 'til late, they will be the Grinch the next day. Sensitive children are particularly vulnerable to the upset of disrupted bedtimes.

♦ *Clothing Battles*

Chose your battles and if what they wear doesn't bother you too much, this is a battle best lost. Christmas clothes are traditionally fancy but sensitive children, will have sets of clothes that you know they are happy with, let them wear them.

♦ *One Activity a Day*

Schedule only ONE activity per day. A party in the cousins, followed by a trip to the movies is just looking for trouble .

• *The Santa Visit*

A sensory seeking child will be likely to crash into Santa and jump up and down on his knee and a sensory avoider will be overwhelmed, just walking past the elves and candy canes, so by the time they reach Santa they're in full shrieking meltdown.

Go as early as you can manage, avoid lines where possible, have plenty of low sugar snacks on hand and explain to your child that they don't have to sit on Santa's knee if they don't want to. Give them something that they like to hold for sensory input

• *Picky Eaters*

Anyone familiar with these picky eaters will know not to try to feed them food they don't like. Don't expect them to eat much of the Christmas dinner, most of it is unfamiliar in the every day. Have a familiar dish to hand and lower your expectations. Christmas Day is not the time to encourage anyone to try new food

• *Retreat*

When all else fails, retreat. Christmas can be overwhelming for all of us. Know the limits.