



— **The True Spirit of the Holidays** —

Gargantuan amounts of food and gift giving have become synonymous with the Holidays. As we fill our to-do lists with daily chores, gifts we need to buy, holiday cards we need to mail, meals we need to prepare, etc. etc., let's not forget to include time to reflect upon the true meaning of the Holidays. Whether it's Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year or any other wonderful holiday we celebrate, remember that the best part of it all is spending quality time with friends and family. For some, the holidays may bring feelings of hope and joy, but for others, they may be a reminder of hard or sad times. We all have our ways to celebrate and reflect during these times, so let's all take the opportunity to look into what really makes the holidays special and be thankful and hopeful for what they may bring.

Before tackling holiday to-do lists, take some time to also make a wish list of all the good things you can possibly do with family and friends during the holidays. Also think of things you can do for those in need, those who may not have the opportunity to enjoy a good holiday meal or gift or spend time with people they love. Think of the holidays as of a golden opportunity to reignite or strengthen a relationship. Remember time flies, and before you know it children become grown-ups, friends may grow apart, and opportunities may pass us by. Enjoy the wonderful holiday feasts and gifts, but also embrace the feelings that surround the festivities and make every day and every minute count. Your holiday to-do list should become

more of a tool towards achieving the things on your wish list. Your wish list will help you focus on things beyond the physical and material traditions of the holidays.

Below is an idea of what a holiday wish list may look like:

- Bake holiday cookies with the kids
- Start a new family tradition
- Reconnect with old friends
- Have a family holiday movie night
- Have a no-gadget holiday celebration
- Look for volunteer opportunities as a family
- Come up with ideas for new year resolutions
- Make new friends
- Offer a helping hand to someone in need
- Plan for a family game night
- Reflect upon everything you are thankful for
- Plan a holiday family trip or outing
- Mend broken relationships
- Teach kids why we celebrate the holidays and help them spread the joy

As you can see, not everything has to be about getting the perfect gift or competing to make the best holiday meal. Although a lot of us have our holiday to-do lists, make sure to always take time to reflect upon the true spirit of the holidays. It's easy to fall into the shopping frenzies and eating marathons, so try your best to remember that there is so much more when it comes to celebrating and appreciating the holidays!

- Mey-ling Cortinas

News & Events

• **Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year!**

We wish everyone a wonderful Holiday season and a Happy New Year! May the New Year bring you health, happiness and prosperity!

• **Holiday at the Arboretum**

November 9 - December 31
 8525 Garland Road, Dallas
 The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden presents The 12 Days of Christmas. For more information visit www.visitdallas.com/things-to-do/events/view/9784/Holiday-at-the-Arboretum.html

• **Zilker Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony**

December 1 at 5:30 p.m.
 2100 Barton Springs Rd., Austin
 Austin's annual Zilker Holiday Tree Lighting kicks off the season of festivities in Zilker Park the first Sunday after Thanksgiving. Its complimentary and open to anyone to enjoy! For more information visit <https://austintexas.gov/zilkerholidaytree>

Resources

• **VIVA Pediatrics Resources**

In an effort to help our families, we constantly strive to provide them with relevant and helpful resources and information. Visit our resources page online at: www.vivaped.com/resources

For current events visit us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds

• **Care Starter App**

The Connections App is a complete resource guide for families of kids, teens and adults with special needs. Their goal is to help you find providers, organizations and other resources in your community to help you along your path of care. Download the CareStarter App now! www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp



• **The Parker Lee Project**

The Parker Lee Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families of children with medical needs obtain the necessary supplies & equipment, education, and support they need. While most supplies are covered by insurance, some are not, or not enough supplies are provided. If you have a need for medical supplies or have supplies to donate, please visit their website at www.theparkerleeproject.org

• **Texas Star Kids**

The Texas' Star Kids mandate threatens the lives of our weakest and most vulnerable little citizens. Join us in standing up for those who have no voice. Click this link to sign up: www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids
For more info visit: www.protecttxfragilekids.org

• **Thrive Magazine**

Need Resources for your child with special needs? Thrive Magazine shares resources and stories of other families in the DFW area who are living and thriving with special needs. www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory

• **Recognize a VIVA Star**

Viva Pediatrics has an Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to thank and recognize employees that go "above and beyond". Both employees and patient families are welcome to recognize a VIVA employee! Call one of our offices and let us know if a VIVA employee has gone above and beyond!



Get Healthy with Giggles

Make your holiday family festivities extra special by making health and safety a priority this winter season.

Wash your hands frequently. With flu season upon us, practicing healthy hygiene habits could make a big difference in preventing your child and yourself from getting sick. It's recommended by doctors to wash your hands with a lather of soap and warm, clean running water for at least 20 seconds. It would also be helpful to keep travel-size hand sanitizers in your pocket or purse when on the go.

Prepare your holiday feast safely. Keep knives and raw meat out of reach from small children. Encourage them to play outside or in another room to avoid kitchen accidents such as falls and burns. For older children, involve them in the food preparation process. Take this time to teach them about traditional family recipes and healthy holiday eating habits.

Exercise, exercise, exercise! Don't let the holiday season trip up your family fitness schedule. Be active for at least an hour everyday but don't limit yourself to just working out at the gym. If the weather isn't too cold, take a nice family stroll around your neighborhood or at the park. When the weather outside gets too chilly, get creative with activities that get everybody up and moving around.

From our VIVA family to yours, we hope you have a healthy, jolly holiday!

- Jordyn Ruiz

Food for Thought



EggNogg Cheesecake

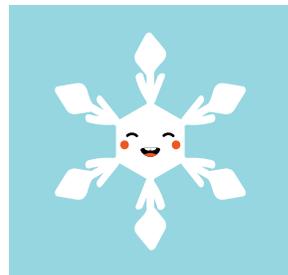
Ingredients

- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- 3 (8 oz) pkgs cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup eggnog
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons rum
- 1 pinch ground nutmeg

Directions

- Preheat oven to 325 degrees
- In medium bowl combine graham cracker crumbs, 2 tbsps sugar and butter and press into the bottom of a 9 inch spring form pan.
- Bake in preheated oven for 10 min. Place on a rack to cool.
- Preheat oven to 425 degrees
- In a food processor combine cream cheese, 1 cup sugar, flour and eggnog; process until smooth.
- Blend in eggs, rum and nutmeg
- Pour mixture into cooled crust.
- Bake in preheated oven for 10 min.
- Reduce heat to 250 and bake for 45 min., or until center of cake is barely firm to the touch.
- Remove from oven and loosen cake from rim. Let cake cool completely before removing the rim.

What falls in the winter but never gets hurt?



Snow!



Just for Giggles!