

Tips for a More Neuro-Friendly Christmas 🎄

The holiday season can be a magical time, but for autistic children, adults, and their families, Christmas can also bring unique challenges. Changes in routine, an increase in social activities, and sensory overload from lights, sounds, and decorations can create a difficult environment for those who thrive on predictability and calm.

Add to that the pressures of gift-giving, unfamiliar foods, and heightened expectations, and it's no wonder Christmas can feel overwhelming.

So how can we make the holiday season enjoyable for everyone? Here are some practical tips to help make this Christmas more autism-friendly:



Stick to Regular Routines Whenever Possible

The predictability of routines is a comfort for many autistic people. Keeping things as consistent as possible can help reduce anxiety.



Use a Visual Schedule

Create a calendar or visual timetable to map out events, mealtimes, and quiet times. This can help prepare everyone for what's coming and make transitions smoother.



Talk to Family and Friends in Advance

Explain what autism means for your family and share any adjustments that will make the day more manageable. This could include quieter gatherings or avoiding unplanned surprises.



Create a Quiet Area

Designate a sensory-friendly space where your child can retreat to if they need a break from the hustle and bustle.



Do Presents Your Way

Traditional gift-giving may not work for every family. Open presents at a quieter time, or spread them out over a few days to avoid sensory overload.



Prepare a Christmas Dinner Everyone Can Enjoy

Don't stress about traditional menus. Prepare foods your child loves and is comfortable with—it's about celebrating together, not the menu.



Prioritise Your Child's Needs

It's okay to say no to events or traditions that don't work for your family. Putting your child's needs first benefits everyone in the long run.



Create Your Own Traditions

Forget perfection. Find what works for your family and build traditions that bring joy to all of you.

Every autistic person is unique, so these ideas may need to be adapted to suit your family. Hopefully, they'll inspire you to find ways to make Christmas a little calmer, a little brighter, and a lot more enjoyable for everyone.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyful Christmas,

The PINS Team  