

# HOW TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN HOSPICE

The holiday season offers special opportunities for families to embrace time together. However, Bon Secours recognizes this can be difficult when a loved one is under hospice care. This season will look different (likely with mixed emotions), and that's okay. Here are some ideas to foster connection and adapt traditions during this unique time.

## *With your loved one*

- **Prioritize the patient:** Ask if your loved one has what is needed, including personal care, medication, support, privacy and rest. Check if the hospice patient has any priorities or wishes for the season.
- **Be flexible:** Perhaps you want to celebrate a few weeks early if your loved one is declining. Some families choose to do a few small activities throughout the season instead of putting a lot of pressure on a specific day. Schedule your celebration when the patient is most alert.
- **Understand limitations:** As people approach the end of life, they sleep more frequently. Also, they do not need as much food or drink because their body can't process it as much, so perhaps offer one or two favorite holiday foods instead of a heaping plate.
- **Embrace peace over chaos:** Simplify holiday commitments and minimize household commotion. Presence and silence are often special gifts to hospice patients. We recommend fewer visitors, decorations, outings, presents and lights than previous years.
- **Listen to music:** Ask the patient about favorite holiday songs. Perhaps create a playlist or play special songs (or movies) softly.
- **Reminisce:** Look at old pictures or family movies. Tell stories about holiday memories and consider recording a few with audio or video.
- **Make memories:** Your loved one is still alive, so capture special time together!

## *With others*

- **Plan ahead:** Communicate your holiday ideas with others, listen to their hopes and fears, then work together on compromises. Expect that you may have to change plans at the last minute.
- **Coordinate visitors:** Find out the patient's preferences for small or large group gatherings, then communicate with guests accordingly. Consider posting a sign on the front door clarifying that visits should be limited to a specific length of time. To involve others, perhaps arrange short video calls, particularly for relatives out of town.
- **Embrace spirituality:** Incorporate songs, prayers or practices in modified ways, which may provide guidance in such an uncertain time.
- **Be creative:** Cook your loved one's favorite recipe, place one meaningful decoration in the patient's room or make a holiday remembrance ornament. Perhaps this will be a small new ritual in honor of your loved one.

## *For yourself*

- **Stay connected to your feelings:** Emotions aren't right or wrong; feelings are an indicator of what is happening. Avoid eating or drinking too much, which simply masks underlying emotions.
- **Explore positive coping strategies:** Try writing, talking, meditating, praying, embracing creative expression or exercising. Others will likely cope differently than you. Be patient with others and extend compassion to yourself.
- **Reach out for support:** Talk about your concerns with friends and family. Contact Bon Secours Hospice at **804-627-5360** for additional spiritual and emotional support.



# LIGHTS LO Love

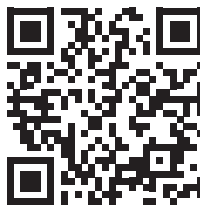
[givebsmh.org/richmond/hospice](https://givebsmh.org/richmond/hospice)

Consider dedicating a light to a loved one at the Community Hospice House as part of their seasonal holiday display. Lights of Love not only serves as a way to honor or celebrate someone, but also raises funds for Bon Secours Richmond Health Care Foundation to support hospice services.

Please join us as we illuminate Lights of Love this holiday season with a special drive-through event.

**Thursday, November 30, 2023**  
**5 p.m-6:30 p.m.**

**Bon Secours Community Hospice House**  
**1133 Old Bon Air Rd., Richmond, VA 23235**



Purchase your lights online at [givebsmh.org/Richmond/hospice](https://givebsmh.org/Richmond/hospice) or mail a check to:  
5855 Bremon Rd. Suite 100  
Richmond, VA 23226

Please note "Lights of Love" and include the honoree's name on the check or when making a gift online.

Hospice families often ask for suggested language regarding memorial gifts to be listed in the obituary, which is provided here if you are considering this.

Gifts in memory of\*(name) can be made to Bon Secours Hospice (or Bon Secours Community Hospice House) and mailed to 5855 Bremon Rd., Suite 100, Richmond, VA 23226.

Memorial gifts can also be made online at [givebsmh.org/richmond/hospice](https://givebsmh.org/richmond/hospice).

If you have questions, please contact Paige Bullen at [paige\\_bullen@bshsi.org](mailto:paige_bullen@bshsi.org) or 540-290-6325.

 **Bon Secours**