

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program accessible on the ReachMD network. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/gi-insights/withstanding-winters-threats-facing-gi-patients/12130/>

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Withstanding Winter's Threats Facing GI Patients

Dr. Buch:

This is Dr. Peter Buch from *GI Insights*. On behalf of our organization, I wanted to thank you for your incredible devotion to your patients. When history is recorded, your sacrifices will be a paradigm to which future doctors, nurses, PAs, APRNs, MAs, and all others caring for patients will strive.

As the vaccines are being distributed, and as we see a brighter future, I wanted to remind you to take care of yourselves and each other. For our patients, make sure they are taking care of themselves properly. Make sure they get their flu vaccines. Encourage your patients to seek your help for urgent medical problems, especially now that COVID is such a big problem in this country, and to collaborate with you regarding the timing of follow-up visits and procedures.

Medicine oftentimes demands a laser focus on our patients. We shouldn't be forgetting about ourselves. Even lasers need maintenance. We are not machines. We need to remind ourselves to take breaks and unwind even for a minute or two. Eat properly, exercise again even for a short period of time. Get the sleep you need. It may not be the sleep you're used to, but you've got to get that sleep. Connect to others. Please take care of yourselves but also remember there may be a colleague in trouble who needs your help. Please reach out.

Looking forward to a brighter future, this is Dr. Peter Buch for ReachMD. Thank you so much for joining us.

Dr. Nandi:

Coming to you from ReachMD Studios in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, this is *GI Insights*. I'm Dr. Neil Nandi, and on this episode, I'm going to share some tips on how we can help keep our patients safe throughout the winter season, especially amidst a 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Whereas we often focus on things you cannot do, I hope to provide you some concrete tips on things that you can do to better enjoy your 2020 winter COVID season.

Now many times, communities are used to congregating together, reminiscing the year in review while breaking bread, imbibing libations, and enjoying the most scrumptious cuisine that the holiday season is known for. This extends as early as October with Halloween through the New Year, and into early February with the Super Bowl. And yes, that is considered a national American holiday. But how do you, I, and all our friends and family celebrate this year of 2020, when the pandemic is in its second wave, and the new vaccines are only just arriving? Here's my take.

First, if you are congregating over food, then I recommend that you try to socialize only with your family that you cohabit with. This is the most effective strategy at preventing further transmission of the coronavirus. If you must have an elderly grandparent at your table, think about inviting them through a televideo chat. Set a tablet and a place for them at the dinner table. If you must meet, then get some heat lamps and eat outdoors. Of course, it is cold – very cold – in the northern parts of America. If you're eating and enjoying food with one another, remember to wash your hands – soap and water is one of the most effective deterrents at effectively killing the coronavirus. If you're having placemats with utensils, plates, cups – think about getting paper utensils, not porcelain. This way, you can avoid cross-contamination with dish washing and you can also recycle.

Beyond the holidays and other wintertime events focused around food, what are some of the other biggest threats facing our GI patients this winter, and how can we help them stay safe and healthy? Well of course, we've heard all about social distancing, limiting gatherings, minimizing travel, hand sanitizers, and masking up. But what else can you do? Well, you can go for a drive. You can go to a park. You can go for a hike. There are wonderful apps like AllTrails that you can utilize to take you and your family out into the wilderness. Also,

you're used to using telemedicine and televideo conferencing for patient care and business meetings. But you can also use the same platforms to play games with one another. In fact, there's wonderful platforms, like Jackbox Games, an application that I get online. I get all my friends from across the globe, and we can actually play board games together.

Of course, there's other, even more concrete things that you can do to help your patients and help yourself, including vaccination. So get vaccinated for the flu shot and pneumonia. And now that the mRNA vaccines have finally made it into distribution, you should be hearing soon from your local news channels when you can be vaccinated too. It's safe, it's effective, and it'll help us get back on track.

And then, of course, there is emotional wellbeing and fitness. When it comes to fitness, there's walking, there's yoga, there's all sorts of different activities that you can stream online. But remember, fitness is helpful for the body and the mind. For the mind, we recommend regular meditation, reflection, you can journal, you can read books, or you can just sit in silence. And of course, virtual reality can transport you to a million places around the world if you're stir-crazy, or can help you meditate in psychedelic experiences and worlds that you never imagined.

If you're missing out on holiday shopping, you're going to have to miss a little longer. We discourage any type of in-person shopping, especially during the crowded holidays, but that doesn't mean you can't take advantages of online delivery and shopping sprees that are sure to abound before, during, and after the holiday season. Ironically, I also want you to encourage limiting social media time. We're all getting burned out from information overload so make time for yourself. Remember that one year will have passed, and we'll be ahead of these fires, but the opportunity and luxury of spending more times with our loved ones will have passed. The world will return to the hustle and bustle of life, and we will be too busy to spend this quality time together. We used to relay that we spent more time with our coworkers than we did our own families, and look where that got us, in regards to personal happiness. So look for your silver lining in this pandemic. Remember it, cherish it, and look to one year from now, and ask if you made the most of your time during social distancing. If not, then focus on what is lacking now.

For ReachMD, I'm Dr. Neil Nandi. Thanks for tuning in. To access this episode and others in our series, please visit reachmd.com/giinsights, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge.