



Safe ways for families to volunteer and donate during the holiday season

During the holiday season, one tradition that many families have is giving back to others through volunteering or donating to causes or organizations that are meaningful to them. But this is not a normal holiday season, and you may be wondering about what options are available so that you can help from home. There are a number of things you can do to help others during this challenging time. **Here are a few ideas:**

Donate. Understandably, many people are facing financial hardships at the moment. If you have the means, consider donating or making purchases that can benefit others.



Funds: Donating to organizations helping to feed others right now is especially important, like [No Kid Hungry](#) or [Meals on Wheels](#).



Supplies: Do you have any extra masks or other types of personal protective equipment from past projects? If so, many hospitals are gratefully accepting donations. Check the website of your local hospital for details.



Support: Consider purchasing gift certificates from your favorite local businesses, like hair salons, boutiques or restaurants. This will help them stay afloat during the shutdown while you can enjoy their services later on.



Blood: Due to the ongoing pandemic, not only have many blood drives been canceled, but the pool of potential donors has decreased. However, the need is just as great as ever. The American Red Cross is taking every precaution necessary to protect donors and staff. For more information, including how to give, visit their website [here](#).

Find new ways to volunteer. For example, if you normally volunteer at a children's hospital or nursing home, call there and see if you can send handwritten cards or care packages to patients or residents.

Show gratitude. Even while home, you can offer support and appreciation to those out there keeping us safe and healthy. If you live near a hospital, put up signs on your windows or in your yard expressing your thanks. Put a thank-you note out for those delivering mail, packages or food to your home. These people continue to be out and about every day, putting themselves at risk to support us, so it's important to support them and make sure they know we are grateful.

Open up your home to a furry friend. Animal shelters are crowded right now, and many animals need loving homes. If your family has the ability and the means, consider adopting a dog or cat. Or if you want to help but aren't able to make a lifetime commitment to an animal right now, consider fostering a dog or cat.



866.695.8622



Email: answers@HealthAdvocate.com
Web: HealthAdvocate.com/members

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