



# Holiday Tip Sheet

The joy of the holidays--a time of extended family, reconnecting with old friends, celebrations and spiritual gatherings. But this year, the pandemic has challenged us all with how we go about normal holiday traditions.

Social interactions may look and feel a bit different, but most significant is the difference in the recognition of conversations being had in those situations. Social distancing and facial masks most likely add a whole new layer of complexity to our holiday encounters.

Preparation is key to minimizing these feelings and boosting confidence. Having an understanding of the type of environment you will be meeting in, how large of a group you will encounter and being aware of any distracting background noise such as a band, will allow you to establish a solution for coping with such conditions.

Lastly, ensure that your device is in optimal working order. The holidays are a good reminder to change out microphone covers if you haven't in the last few months, charge the batteries or get new ones, and clean the processor with Cochlear™ Saline Wipes.

## So, what can you do to improve communication in situations where social distancing and wearing masks is important?

- When you are speaking, use clear speech, speak up and face the person you are talking to. Ask the other person to do the same for you! Try to make and maintain eye contact.
- Reduce background noise or move to a quieter location if that is at all possible.
- Wear your hearing devices! Also make sure your device is functioning well and batteries are fully charged before you leave home.
- Make good use of all your technology has to offer and use features like SmartSound® iQ with SCAN or ForwardFocus® for Cochlear™ Nucleus® 7 Sound Processor where appropriate.
- Consider using assistive listening accessories like a Cochlear™ True Wireless™ Mini Microphone 2/2+ or an iPhone® feature like Live Listen, but don't forget about social distancing and maintaining hygiene of devices.

## Let the tips below be a guide for planning your approach to take pleasure in the holiday season:

- In a crowded room, move away from the center of the room to a more secluded corner when having a one-on-one conversation.
- Turning one ear towards the person you are listening to can make it easier to hear over background noise.
- Find a booth to sit in versus sitting at a table. The high backs of the booth will provide you a buffer from noise.
- Ensure you are not standing under, near a heater/air conditioning vent, fan, music speaker, etc.
- Try to stay away from tile or hardwood flooring. Look for a carpeted area. Carpeting can help to buffer environmental sound.
- Avoid sitting at the end of the table if sitting with a larger group. Sit in middle to have better opportunity to hear more of the conversation.
- Turn your back to where the majority of the noise is coming from.
- Don't sit near the kitchen area or wait staff area to ensure you are not picking up on dishes clanking, etc.
- Move to a more well-lit area of the room to capitalize on visual clues—lip reading, hand gestures, captions, etc.
- Don't face a window, especially during the day. The glare can make it more difficult to read visual cues from others.
- Pay close attention to what you are listening to. Research has shown that paying attention can enhance brain activity and can lead to better understanding.
- Pair up with a partner or friend. The more ears the better.
- Ensure you are getting adequate sleep, nourishment, etc. These all play a critical role to overall wellbeing and outcomes.
- If you need something repeated or rephrased, do not hesitate to ask.
- Many times, friends and family members may not realize you are struggling. Communication is key. Talk to them if you don't understand, or if things are too loud. Suggest changes that can help make a positive effect on your experience.

©Cochlear Limited 2020. All rights reserved. Hear now. And always and other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of Cochlear Limited or Cochlear Bone Anchored Solutions AB. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

**Cochlear Americas**  
10350 Park Meadows Drive  
Lone Tree, CO 80124 USA  
Telephone: 303 790 9010  
Support: 800 483 3123

**Cochlear Canada Inc.**  
2500-120 Adelaide Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 1T1 Canada  
Support: 800 483 3123