Preparing for Christmas Shopping With Lupus

by BARBARA LEECH

How to Start and Finish Christmas Shopping With Lupus

I have a confession: I have not even begun shopping for Christmas gifts yet. Lupus and life have been too much for me lately, and it is all I can do to simply get through what I must, never mind take on any extra tasks.

Some people love shopping; me...not so much. This combination of excuses has brought me to this moment where I sit on a perfectly good Saturday morning and count the number of days left to find those perfect gifts and decorate my house, and dread washes over me.

There are many issues that make holiday shopping more difficult when you have lupus. In Maine, where I live, the weather is a major challenge on the body. It is very cold and there is a heavy blanket of snow on the ground (which took out our power for Thanksgiving) and I need to dress in layers and bundle up or cold weather and lupus will leave me in so much pain I cannot think clearly enough to shop.

Then there is my memory issues and brain fog. In years past, I have found that I have no clue what I have bought from one store to the next. Yes, I have in the past bought two of the same toy.

Remembering everybody on my list is also a challenge. I feel lost in the pain and fog.

My Plan for This Year's Christmas Shopping With Lupus

So today, I have a plan I will stick to. I will have courage and get this shopping done and you can borrow my plan, and a bit of my courage if yours is lacking, and we shall accomplish our mission impossible together.

- **Make a list and check it twice –** Or maybe check three times, because we probably forgot something or someone. Create a complete list of who you need to buy for and have it with you (like in your car or purse) so you can tackle shopping whenever a moment presents itself.
- **Write down on your list, next to each name, exactly what you end up buying –** This will keep things straight in your memory about checking everyone off your list and knowing whose name to put on the tag when you get to wrapping each item.

- **Wrap as you go –** I am bad at this. I always wait until wrapping requires endless hours on Christmas Eve, which only adds to my fatigue and stress.
- **Shop when you can in small increments –** This is why the list will help. If you have a bit of energy after dropping off the kids at school, head to one store and cross a couple of people off your list. Basically, pace yourself.
- **Remember the gifts are not what the holiday is all about –** We all forget that at times. Keep a healthy perspective and remember what really matters.

If getting out to the mall just isn't doable, you can always shop online if you start soon enough. Above all else, do

not push yourself into a flare or make the current one worse than it already is.

Be good to yourself. I send to you a gentle lupie hug and beg you to take your time and do not stress over the holidays and shopping. Value everything that is truly important and that includes being as healthy as lupus allows you to be for the holidays.