



Enjoying Special Occasions with MG

Life is filled with moments worth celebrating—birthdays, weddings, graduations, family reunions, vacations, holidays, community events, and time spent with the people who matter most. These occasions can bring joy, connection, and lasting memories, but they can also involve travel, busy schedules, physical demands, and changes to your normal routine.

For people living with myasthenia gravis (MG), the combination of increased activity, stress, heat, travel, disrupted sleep, and fatigue may contribute to worsening symptoms. The good news is that with thoughtful planning, realistic expectations, and a willingness to accept help, you can enjoy life's special moments while protecting your health and conserving your energy.

Whether you're attending a family barbecue, hosting a holiday meal, traveling for a wedding, or celebrating a grandchild's birthday, remember that the goal isn't perfection—it's creating meaningful memories while taking care of yourself.

Plan Ahead

Planning ahead can help reduce stress and prevent unnecessary fatigue before, during, and after special events.

Consider:

- Reviewing your calendar and avoiding scheduling too many activities in a short period.
- Prioritizing the celebrations and events that are most meaningful to you.
- Breaking larger tasks into smaller steps over several days or weeks.
- Shopping, decorating, packing, or preparing food well in advance.
- Scheduling rest breaks before and after busy days.
- Allowing extra time for travel and unexpected delays.
- Planning for weather conditions, especially if heat affects your MG symptoms.

Using the Four Ps of Energy Conservation—Plan, Prioritize, Pace, and Position—can help you participate in the activities that matter most while managing fatigue.

Shopping & Event Preparation

Whether you're buying gifts, preparing for a celebration, or gathering supplies for a family event, planning can help reduce stress and conserve energy.

Energy-Saving Tips

- Shop online whenever possible.
- Take advantage of curbside pickup or home delivery.
- Make a shopping list before leaving home.
- Shop during less crowded times of the day.
- Use a shopping cart instead of carrying heavy bags.
- Divide shopping into several shorter trips rather than one long day.
- Consider gift cards, digital gifts, or charitable donations in someone's honor.
- Use gift bags instead of wrapping paper to save time and energy.
- Ask family or friends to help with errands or pickups when needed.

Four Ps of Energy Conservation

Plan

Think ahead and organize your day around your energy levels.

Prioritize

Not everything has to be done today. Focus your energy on the activities that are most meaningful and important to you.

Pace

Avoid the "push-crash" cycle. Instead of working until you're exhausted, alternate periods of activity with planned rest breaks.

Position

How you perform a task can be just as important as the task itself. Small changes in positioning (sitting vs. standing) can significantly reduce muscle fatigue and help you conserve energy.

Cooking & Food Preparation

Preparing meals for celebrations often involves prolonged standing, lifting, and repetitive hand movements.

Energy-Saving Tips

- Prepare foods in advance and freeze them when possible.
- Sit while chopping or mixing ingredients.
- Use lightweight cookware and electric kitchen appliances.
- Purchase pre-cut vegetables or prepared side dishes.
- Alternate cooking tasks with short rest breaks.
- Ask others to help lift heavy pots, serving dishes, or coolers.

Sometimes convenience is the best ingredient.

Family Gatherings, Parties & Special Events

Whether you're attending a birthday party, graduation, reunion, wedding, holiday gathering, or neighborhood celebration, social events can be enjoyable without exhausting your energy reserves.

Tips for Enjoying Gatherings

- Attend the events that are most meaningful to you.
- Don't feel obligated to accept every invitation.
- Arrive earlier if your energy is usually better earlier in the day.
- Sit whenever possible.
- Take breaks in a quiet area if you begin feeling fatigued.
- Stay hydrated and eat regular meals.
- If alcohol is served, follow your healthcare provider's recommendations and be mindful of how it affects your symptoms.
- Consider spending a shorter amount of time at large gatherings.
- Leave early if you begin noticing increased weakness or fatigue.



Remember, it's perfectly okay to say:

"I'd love to celebrate with everyone, but I'll need to head home early so I can rest."

Hosting Friends & Family

Hosting can be rewarding, but it doesn't have to mean doing everything yourself.

Consider:

- Asking guests to bring a favorite dish.
- Ordering prepared foods or catering part of the meal.
- Using disposable or compostable dinnerware when appropriate.
- Decorating only the areas that matter most.
- Spreading decorating and preparations over several days.
- Asking family members to help set up and clean up.
- Simplifying traditions if they have become overwhelming.
- Hosting earlier in the day if that's when your energy is highest.

The goal is spending time together—not creating a perfect event.

Decorating & Event Setup

Decorating for holidays, birthdays, parties, or family celebrations can be physically demanding.

Consider:

- Decorating a little at a time.
- Choosing lightweight decorations.
- Sitting while wrapping gifts or assembling decorations.
- Avoiding ladders if you have weakness, fatigue, or balance concerns.
- Asking family or friends to help with outdoor decorations or lifting heavy storage bins.
- Focusing on a few favorite decorations rather than trying to do everything.

Travel for Special Occasions

Many celebrations involve travel, whether it's a family reunion, wedding, graduation, or vacation.

If you're traveling:

- Pack medications in your carry-on bag.
- Bring extra medication in case of delays.
- Schedule rest breaks during long trips.
- Stay hydrated.
- Dress comfortably.
- Request wheelchair or airport assistance if needed.
- Plan downtime after arriving before participating in activities.
- Consider your energy level before adding extra sightseeing or excursions.

Building rest into your travel plans can help you enjoy the event rather than recover from it.

Managing Stress and Difficult Emotions

Special occasions are often joyful, but they can also bring increased expectations, financial pressures, busy schedules, and emotional stress.

Healthy ways to manage stress include:

- Setting realistic expectations.
- Saying "no" when necessary.
- Asking for help.
- Taking time to rest each day.
- Practicing deep breathing, mindfulness, or relaxation exercises.
- Spending time outdoors when weather permits.
- Connecting with supportive family, friends, or an MG support group.

Taking care of yourself is one of the best ways to enjoy the celebration.

Coping with Difficult Emotions

Not every celebration feels joyful. Birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and family gatherings can sometimes bring feelings of grief, loneliness, financial stress, or disappointment.

If you're struggling:

- Be kind to yourself.
- Keep expectations realistic.
- Reach out to family or friends.
- Attend an MG support group.
- Continue healthy routines like sleep, balanced meals, and gentle activity.
- Consider speaking with a mental health professional if difficult feelings become overwhelming.

Every emotion is valid, and you don't have to navigate challenging seasons alone.

Listen to Your Body

One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is permission to rest.

Pay attention to warning signs such as:

- Increased muscle weakness
- Double vision
- Drooping eyelids
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing
- Increased fatigue
- Shortness of breath

If symptoms worsen, slow down, rest, and contact your healthcare provider if symptoms are concerning.

Remember What Matters Most

Special occasions aren't measured by perfectly wrapped gifts, elaborate meals, spotless homes, or attending every event on the calendar. They're about celebrating milestones, strengthening relationships, and creating meaningful memories with the people you care about.

By planning ahead, pacing yourself, accepting help, and focusing on what matters most, you can enjoy celebrations throughout the year while supporting both your health and your well-being.

Conclusion

Key Takeaways

- There is no one-size-fits-all recommendation regarding alcohol and MG.
- Alcohol may temporarily worsen fatigue, weakness, balance, or vision in some people.
- Alcohol can interact with medications commonly used to treat MG and other health conditions.
- Moderate alcohol use may be appropriate for some individuals but always discuss your personal situation with your healthcare provider.
- The safest choice is the one that supports your health, independence, and quality of life.

Helpful Resources

Myasthenia Gravis Association (MGA)

The Myasthenia Gravis Association provides:

- [Support groups](#)
- Educational webinars
 - [Video Library of previous webinars](#)
- Patient Education
- [Resource library](#)
- Advocacy opportunities
- Connections to others living with MG

Website: <https://mgassociation.org>

Additional Resources

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) – Energy conservation and activity modification strategies
- Ask your neurologist or primary care provider for a referral to an occupational therapist if daily activities are becoming more difficult.