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## HEALTH OBSERVANCE

### International Aids Awareness Month

*Dawn Koch – Wellworks For You*

Each December is dedicated to HIV and Aids Awareness.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with the introduction of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) and other treatments during the last two decades, people with HIV/AIDS in the United States are living longer. HAART has also dramatically reduced the incidence of opportunistic infections, such as tuberculosis, that take advantage of weakened immune systems. However, as studies have shown, HIV-positive women who do not develop AIDS are still at high risk for chronic health problems, such as low bone mineral density to diabetes.

More tools than ever are available to prevent HIV. You can use strategies such as abstinence, never sharing needles, and using condoms correctly every time you have sex. You may also be able to take advantage of HIV prevention medicines such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). If you have HIV, there are actions you can take to prevent transmitting HIV to others.

#### Tips to reduce the risk of getting HIV from the NIH:

- Get tested for HIV
- Choose less risky sexual behaviors
- Use condoms every time you have sex
- Limit your number of sexual partners
- Get tested and treated for STDs
- Talk to your healthcare provider about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Do not inject drugs

Source: [The Basics of HIV Prevention | NIH](#).



#### WellBalance Health Corner

#### Reflecting on Your Relationships

Take time this month to reflect on the relationships in your life.

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#### Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season

Coping with grief during the holiday season can be a heavy burden. Learn about ways to cope.

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## Reflecting on your Relationships

Kellie O'Keefe – Wellworks For You



Healthy relationships are critical to our emotional well-being and have been linked to healthier and longer lives.

According to an article by Harvard, positive relationships contribute to increased life expectancy, decreased stress responses, and even more significant resistance to the common cold. This makes it essential to take time to reflect on whether your connections are promoting love and positivity in your life.

### Some relationships to reflect on:

- Friendships
- Coworkers
- Family
- Romantic Partners
- Yourself

### Some questions you can ask yourself about your relationship with others:

- Does this person leave me feeling uplifted?
- Do they push me to be the best version of myself?
- Are they trustworthy and respectful?
- Do they accept my boundaries?
- Does this person encourage growth?

Including yourself in the list of relationships you are reflecting on is important. After all, it is the only relationship you will have for the entirety of your life.

### Some questions you can ask yourself about your relationship with yourself are:

- What are the messages I repeat to myself?
- Would I speak to a loved one the way I speak to myself?
- Where can I give myself more grace and kindness?

By taking the time this month to reflect on the relationships in your life, you can enter the new year with a newfound understanding and sense of connection to yourself and those you love.

Source: [B-2 B-Well: Reflecting on Relationships | Harvard University - The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences](#)

# Coping with Loss

## During the Holiday Season

*Kayla Wolf – Wellworks for You*

For many, the holidays represent an excellent time to unite, celebrate, and create memories over endless sweet treats with friends and family. However, others spend the holiday season quite differently - grieving the loss of loved ones.

When going through the grieving process, we may feel like we are just barely getting by with the everyday tasks; therefore, celebrating the holidays without all our loved ones may trigger overwhelming sadness, fear, and even anger. Those coping with loss, regardless of how recent or long ago the loss occurred, may wish to fast-forward through the Holiday celebrations.

If you find yourself struggling to prepare for the upcoming holiday season while coping with loss, please note a few ideas below designed to help you preserve and honor your capacity this holiday season.

**Opt Out.** If you do not feel up to attending the annual holiday dinner or gift exchange, do not attend. Practice self-care and tend to your needs – it does not make you selfish.

**One Day at a Time.** This year's celebrations may look different; however, it does not mean next year's holiday season will look the same. Take it one day at a time and allow yourself time to grieve. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, nor is there a time limit on the grieving process.

**Start New Traditions.** Should you celebrate the holidays, find ways to honor lost loved ones. Encourage guests to wear their favorite color, perfect their favorite recipe, or light a candle honoring them.

**Know You Are Not Alone.** Even if you stay home this holiday season, you may wish to connect with others navigating similar situations. Participating in grief blog discussions and virtual support groups are a few ways to respect boundaries and avoid isolation.

Source: [Coping with grief and loss during the holidays - Harvard Health](#)



## FEATURED RECIPE

## Almond Flour Cake

8 Servings

Dairy Free, Gluten Free, Soy-Free, Vegetarian



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 large eggs, separated
- 1 tablespoon orange zest, plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon almond extract
- ½ cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 ½ cups almond flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cups raw sliced almonds
- Sifted confectioners' sugar for garnish

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch cake pan or removable bottom springform pan with cooking spray. Line the bottom with parchment paper.
2. Whisk egg yolks, orange zest, almond extract and ¼ cup sugar in a large bowl until combined, about 1 minute.
3. Using a spoon or spatula, gently stir in almond flour, baking powder and salt.
4. Beat egg whites in a medium bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Slowly add the remaining ¼ cup sugar, beating until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes.
5. Add one-third of the beaten egg white mixture to the egg yolk mixture, gently folding until smooth and lightened.
6. Fold in the remaining beaten egg white mixture carefully until just combined. Spread the batter into the prepared pan; top evenly with sliced almonds.
7. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
8. Remove from the pan and carefully place, almond-side up, on the rack. Let stand until cooled completely, about 30 minutes.
9. Garnish with confectioners' sugar and/or orange zest, if desired.

## NUTRITION

Serving Size: 1 slice

## Per Serving:

Calories: 258	Protein: 9g
Carbohydrates: 19g	Dietary Fiber: 3g
Fat: 17g	Saturated Fat: 2g
Calcium: 113mg	Magnesium: 79mg
Sugar: 14g	Sodium: 241mg

Source: [Almond Flour Cake Recipe | EatingWell](#)