

# VACATIONS

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There is not a lot written about vacation time even though this can be a very difficult time. I remember so well the first July vacation we took after Ruthie's death in April. I could not face going and "leaving her" and going to all the places we had been in the past with her. That is one of the "firsts." Here are some hints that may help if you are dreading vacation time. By the way, there is never a time that you don't think of vacations past but the memories get less painful and you begin to forge new memories.

## **Where do we go?**

There is no good answer to that. Yes, if you go where you have always gone on vacations, memories will flood in. But if you choose a totally new place, we found that you just wonder how he/she would have liked it here, what would she have done, etc. So, you take your choice and expect the feelings and plan for them.

## **What do we do if we visit relatives?**

Talk to them. Tell them that it is hard and that it is alright to talk about your child – when they see that you welcome hearing the name and having them share memories they have, everyone can relax

## **Will I forget her/him?**

Don't fear! You can never forget just because you are away from home memories. Don't be afraid to talk about her/him and let them be a part of things.

## **Traveling companion?**

Remember that you can not really leave your grief at home when you go on vacation. It will go with you. Plan for it and pack for it. Don't over-schedule the days and activities. You won't feel like doing as much, perhaps, as usual, and you may tire more easily. Take along some reading material – perhaps on grief but some light reading too.

Just remember that bereaved families and people need a respite from the daily stresses of work and of life and grief. Also know that often the anticipation is worse than the actual event. If you have been through Christmas, a birthday or a death anniversary, etc., you may remember that the weeks or days before may be worrisome and you may not be sure how you will get through it, but suddenly the day is there and over and it wasn't as bad as you expected, even if it was bad.

So just decide when and where the vacation will be, plan ahead, and go. Allow yourself to enjoy it. Often we feel guilty if we have a good time. Remember how much your child enjoyed trips and life and know that she or he would want you to do the same.