

## Promoting Safe Holiday Celebrations During COVID-19

As the pandemic continues, you might be thinking about how to celebrate the holidays and keep yourself and your loved ones safe from the spread of COVID-19. CDC guidelines for Thanksgiving are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html> .

According to the CDC, the first step to help reduce the spread of the virus, is to assess current COVID-19 levels in your community to determine whether to postpone, cancel, or limit the number of attendees. People who shouldn't attend a Thanksgiving gathering this year include those with or exposed to the coronavirus and people who have an increased risk for severe illness. Health officials recommend celebrating virtually or only with family members, which poses only a low risk of spreading the virus. The CDC explains that large gatherings of families and friends, crowded parties and travel may put people at increased risk for COVID-19. Keep informed of CDC Guidelines as they are updated daily.

**If someone is hosting a Thanksgiving gathering, the CDC asks that people consider the following steps to keep everyone safe:**

- Host outdoor activities rather than indoor activities
- Try and limit guests to just people in the local area
- Limit the number of guests as much as possible according to state and CDC guidelines
- Encourage guests to wear masks and use hand sanitizer
- Ask guests to "strictly avoid contact with people outside of their households for 14 days before the gathering"

If someone develops COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive after a gathering, they should immediately contact the host and others that attended the event.

### Food and Drink Safety Tips

Right now, there is no evidence that suggests handling food or eating is associated with spreading the respiratory disease, according to the CDC. However, COVID-19 could spread if someone touches a surface or object, including food, food packaging or utensils where respiratory droplets have landed then they touch their face, nose, or mouth.

**The CDC released a list of suggestions for people to have good hygiene to reduce the risk of spreading germs around food and drinks:**

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Instead of potluck, encourage everyone to have their own drinks and food
- Limit people around the food preparation area
- Wear a mask while preparing food or serving others
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items
- Avoid any self-serve food or drink options

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**Travel Safety Tips:** According to the CDC, [traveling](#) can increase someone's chance of contracting the coronavirus. It states that, "staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others." It asks that people don't travel if they're sick, or if they've been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days. While traveling, the CDC highly recommends everyone wear a mask on public transportation, planes, trains, ships, ferries, taxis and rideshares. Additionally, airports, bus stations, train stations, and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus in the air and on surfaces.

**Low Risk Thanksgiving Activities:** The CDC released a list of low-risk activities that families can follow to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

- Having a small dinner with only people who live in your household
- Preparing traditional family recipes for family and neighbors, especially those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and delivering them in a way that doesn't involve contact with others
- Having a virtual dinner and sharing recipes with friends and family
- Shopping online rather than in person on the day after Thanksgiving or the next Monday
- Watching sporting events, parades, and movies from home

**Moderate Risk Thanksgiving Activities** Here's the CDC's list of moderate risk Thanksgiving activities that have more potential to spread the virus:

- Having a small outdoor dinner with family and friends who live in your community
- Visiting pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is encouraged or enforced, and people are able to maintain social distancing
- Attending small outdoor sports events with safety precautions in place

**High Risk Thanksgiving Activities** According to the CDC, these activities around Thanksgiving could increase someone's chances of becoming infected by the coronavirus:

- Going shopping in crowded stores just before, on, or after Thanksgiving
- Participating or being a spectator at a crowded race
- Attending crowded parades
- Using alcohol or drugs, which can cloud judgement and increase risky behaviors
- Attending large indoor gatherings with people from outside of your household

The holidays will involve extra planning this year. But taking safety precautions can allow you and your family and friends to celebrate and minimize the risk of becoming infected with or spreading the COVID-19 virus.