



Holiday Season Safety

The holidays bring opportunities to connect and celebrate special traditions and meaningful moments with the people in our lives. As you prepare for the upcoming holiday season, make plans to help keep your family, friends, and community safe during this special season. See guidance from the CDC for more tips on safer [holiday celebrations](#).

Vaccination and Testing

- Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. A [growing body of evidence](#) suggests that people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are less likely to become infected and develop symptoms, and are at substantially reduced risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people. For example, see CDC data on [rates of hospitalization for COVID-19 by vaccination status](#).
- Testing is another way to help protect those you love. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or work in a high-risk setting, get tested before attending functions with loved ones. Testing to see if you are positive for COVID-19 and staying home if you are, is one way to prevent transmission, especially to family and friends who are older and/or have pre-existing conditions that put them at high risk for severe disease.

Travel Considerations

- Consider delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated. If eligible for a [booster shot](#), consider getting it before traveling.
- When [traveling](#) this holiday season, consider the mode of transportation, and timing of travel.
 - Consider delaying travel until eligible travelers are fully vaccinated. When they must travel, family members who are not fully vaccinated should get tested for COVID-19 1-3 days before the trip, wear a mask and maintain physical distancing when traveling, wash their hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol), get tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after travel *and* stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days (10 days if not tested).
 - Be aware of the [travel guidance at your final destination](#).

- Consider scheduling shorter or direct trips between locations to minimize potential close contacts.
- Consider scheduling travel during off-peak times to avoid crowds.
- Consider delaying or postponing travel to areas with [substantial or high transmission of COVID-19](#).
- Wear a well-fitting [face mask](#) in indoor public places or crowded outdoor settings (eg. Thanksgiving parades) wash your hands frequently, and practice physical distancing to help protect you and your family.
- Face masks are [required](#) on/in areas of mass transit at this time.
- Drive a private vehicle to reduce your exposure to COVID-19.
- If you need to use commercial transportation, consider traveling during non-peak times when there are likely to be fewer people.
- Know when to delay or cancel your travel. Do not travel if you are sick with fever, cough, or other [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Do not travel if you have recently tested positive for COVID-19, are waiting for results of a COVID-19 test, or have had close contact in the past 14 days with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Holiday Shopping

- Consider shopping online to have items delivered to your home or use curbside pick-up.
- Increase the safety of shopping in person by avoiding crowded shopping times and moving away from crowded spaces in indoor settings.
- Wear a well fitted mask and physically distance for a safer shopping experience for yourself and your community.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer regularly.
- Do not shop in person if you are sick, have [symptoms of COVID-19](#), have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or are waiting for test results.

Guests and Gatherings

- Encourage family and guests to get vaccinated before the planned gathering.
- Gathering outdoors, when weather permits and/or incorporating weather-appropriate clothes, is the safest option for gatherings.
- If indoors, gather in small groups that allow for physical distancing. Consider wearing a well-fitted mask when indoors, even if fully vaccinated, to prevent spreading COVID-19 and to maximize

protection for guests and [family members who are not fully vaccinated](#).

- Consider alternative greetings to decrease risk. Use hand sanitizer after shaking hands.
- Arrange spacious seating to help prevent crowding in your home, especially when eating.
- Open windows as much as possible (weather permitting) in the home for fresh air to help with indoor ventilation.
- Clean and sanitize kitchen and bathrooms after use by guests.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Allow guests to go to the buffet gradually rather than all at once to help prevent crowding over the food.
- Plate and serve food to spaciouly seated guests is another safer option.
- Respect any health and safety accommodations requested by the host.
- When gathering at indoor public places, try to avoid crowded situations/spaces, wear a face mask (unless eating or drinking), wash your hands, keep physical distance, and look for increased ventilation.
- Be sure to pay attention to health and safety accommodations set forth by the management of public spaces.

Additional Celebration Considerations

- Consider alternatives such as preparing and sharing traditional family recipes and food with family and neighbors that keep holiday preparations simple and reduce the likelihood of crowded spaces.
- Consider hosting activities virtually.
- Do not go door to door if experiencing symptoms of illness or waiting for a COVID-19 test result.
- Carol and recite in smaller groups outdoors to stay safer.

As a part of supporting good health during the holiday season, get your COVID-19 vaccine as well as your annual flu vaccine to help protect you, your family, and your community.