

Planning ahead for the Holidays: COVID and Thanksgiving...



Gatherings during the upcoming holidays can be an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends. This holiday season, modify your plans to keep your friends, families, and communities healthy and safe. The CDC offers the following guidelines for small gatherings. Celebrating virtually or with members of your own household (who are consistently taking measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19) poses the lowest risk for spread.

Your household is anyone who currently lives and shares common spaces in your house or apartment. This can include family members, as well as roommates or people who are unrelated to you. People who do not currently live in your housing unit, such as college students who are returning home from school for the holidays, should be considered part of different households. In-person gatherings that bring together family or friends from different households, including college students returning home, pose varying levels of risk.

There are several factors that contribute to the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 at small in-person gatherings.

- **Community levels of COVID-19** – High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the gathering location, as well as in the areas where attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees. Family and friends should consider the number of COVID-19 cases in their community and in the community where they plan to celebrate when deciding whether to host or attend a gathering. Information on the number of cases in an area can often be found on the local health department website.
- **Exposure during travel** – Airports, bus stations, train stations, public transport, gas stations, and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus in the air and on surfaces.
- **Location of the gathering** – Indoor gatherings, especially those with poor ventilation (for example, small enclosed spaces with no outside air), pose more risk than outdoor gatherings.
- **Behaviors of attendees prior to the gathering** – Individuals who did not consistently adhere to [social distancing](#) (staying at least 6 feet apart), [mask wearing](#), [handwashing](#), and other prevention behaviors pose more risk than those who consistently practiced these safety measures.
- **Behaviors of attendees during the gathering** – Gatherings with more safety measures in place, such as [mask wearing](#), [social distancing](#), and [handwashing](#), pose less risk than gatherings where fewer or no preventive measures are being implemented. Use of [alcohol or drugs](#) may alter judgment and make it more difficult to practice COVID-19 safety measures.

Are you still experiencing high levels of stress surrounding holiday planning this year? Don't hesitate to call for help. Counselors are available through EAP. Services are confidential and FREE! Call **800-801-4182**, or **402-354-8000** or email eap@bestcareeap.org to schedule an appointment.

[CDC Thanksgiving Information Link](#)