



Holiday Celebrations During COVID-19

Considerations for Small Gatherings of Family and Friends

Several factors can contribute to the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 at small in-person gatherings. **In combination, these factors will create various amounts of risk:**

- 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 or on CDC's COVID Data Tracker County View.
- Exposure during travel
- Location of the gathering /Duration of the gathering
- Number of people at the gathering
- Behaviors of attendees prior to and during 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

Considerations for Hosting or Attending a Gathering

For hosting a gathering that brings together people from different households. Guests should be aware of these considerations and ask their host what measures will be in place during the gathering. **Hosts should consider the following:**

Consider first if it is safe to hold or attend the gathering on the proposed date.

- Limit the number of attendees as much as possible to allow people from different households to remain at least 6 feet apart at all times. Guests should avoid direct contact, including handshakes and hugs, with others not from their household.
 - Host outdoor rather than indoor gatherings as much as possible. Even outdoors, require guests to wear masks when not eating or drinking. Avoid holding gatherings in crowded, poorly ventilated spaces with persons who are not in your household.
 - Require guests to wear masks. At gatherings that include persons of different households, everyone should always wear a mask that covers both the mouth and nose, except when eating or drinking. It is also important to stay at least 6 feet away from people who are not in your household at all times.
 - Encourage attendees to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items, such as serving utensils/ Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use when feasible.
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Food and Drinks at Small Holiday Gatherings

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way that the virus is spread.

- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill, if possible.
- Have one person who is wearing a mask serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, plates and utensils, and condiments.
- Make sure everyone washes their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after preparing, serving, and eating food and after taking trash out. Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Limit crowding in areas where food is served by having one person dispense food individually to plates, always keeping a minimum of a 6-foot distance from the person whom they are serving.
- Offer no-touch trash cans for guests to easily throw away food items.
- Wash dishes in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water immediately following the gathering.

[For more information on Holiday Gatherings visit:](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays>

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_GuidanceWinterHolidays.pdf

Morris County is now offering FREE at-home COVID-19 saliva and nasal testing to Morris County residents and employees

For more information how to receive your free at-home test see:

<https://health.morriscountynj.gov/coronavirus/#testing>



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