

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Celebrating the Holidays

The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful and isolating for many people. Gatherings during the upcoming holidays can be an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends. This holiday season, consider how your holiday plans can be modified to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to keep your friends, families, and community healthy and safe.

The more contact you have with people outside your household, the higher your risk of getting COVID-19. You and your household are allowed to gather with one or two other households as long as the gathering is outside, lasts no more than 2 hours, and everyone wears face coverings and stays at least six feet from non-household members. If you do choose to take this risk, it is safer to mix with the same 1-2 household(s) repeatedly rather than with different groups. For additional details on private gatherings see the posted [Safer at Home Health Order for the Control of COVID-19](#).

Unfortunately, small household gatherings are an important contributor to rising COVID-19 cases. We offer the following considerations to slow the spread of COVID-19 during small gatherings.

## Everyone can make celebrating safer

- Wear a cloth face covering when outside your home and when around others that are not part of your household.
- Avoid confined and indoor spaces – Actively stay away from indoor spaces that don't allow for easy distancing of at least 6 feet between you and others.
- Avoid close contact – Stay at least 6 feet away from all other people who are not part of your own household, especially while talking, eating, drinking and singing.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Clean frequently touched items regularly.
- If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are sick, or have been in contact with someone who is sick or has symptoms of COVID-19, or if you are waiting for COVID-19 test results, stay home and away from others.

## Choose less risky activities

### Low-to-no risk activities

- Host a virtual meal with friends and family who don't live with you
- Watch sports events, parades, and movies from home
- Safely prepare dishes and deliver them to family and neighbors in a way that does not involve contact (for example, by leaving them on the porch)
- Participate in a gratitude activity, like writing down things you are grateful for and sharing with your friends and family virtually

### Lower risk activities

- 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 at your favorite local retailer rather than in person on the day after Thanksgiving or the

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next Monday

## Moderate risk activities

- 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

## High risk and/or prohibited activities

- Gatherings that include more than 3 households
- Indoor gatherings and dining with people from outside of your household
- 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 that may alter judgment and make it more difficult to practice COVID-19 safety measures

## Gatherings

### Attending a gathering

- Bring your own food, drinks, plates, cups, and utensils or use single-use options, like condiment packets instead of shared dishes
- Avoid any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and condiment or drink stations. Use grab-and-go meal options, if available.
- Avoid going in and out of areas where food is being prepared or handled

### Hosting a gathering

- Have a small outdoor meal with family and friends in your bubble; Limit the number of guests
- Have conversations with guests ahead of time to set expectations for celebrating together
  - Remind invited guests to stay home if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are sick, or if they have been in contact with someone who is sick or has symptoms of COVID-19, or if they are waiting for COVID-19 test results.
  - Anyone who has had close contact with a person who has COVID-19 should stay home and monitor their health.
  - Invited guests who live with those at higher risk should consider the potential risk to their loved ones.
  - Keep a list of guests who attended for potential future contact tracing needs.
  - Limit guests' access to food preparation areas
- Have guests bring their own food and drink
  - If serving any food, consider identifying one person to serve all food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
  - Use single-use options for plates, cups, utensils and condiment packets
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and items between use; If you choose to use any shared items that are reusable (e.g., seating covers, tablecloths, linen napkins), wash, clean, and sanitize them after the event.

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- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing. People from the same household can be in groups together and don't need to be 6 feet apart – just 6 feet away from other families.
- When guests arrive, minimize gestures that promote close contact. For example, don't shake hands or give hugs. Instead wave and verbally greet them.
- Provide hand sanitizer in addition to clearly marked hand washing areas. Remind guests to wash their hands before serving or eating food.
  - Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so guests do not share a towel

## Traveling

Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from the virus. Given the increase in COVID-19 cases both in California and throughout the U.S., residents should avoid non-essential travel and are encouraged to stay home and avoid increased contact with others outside of their household. Do not travel if you are sick or if you have been around someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days. Do not travel with someone who is sick.

### When deciding whether to travel, consider:

- If COVID-19 is spreading at your destination
- If your destination has requirements or restrictions for travelers. Check [state](#), [territorial](#), [tribal](#) and local public health websites for information before you travel.
- If you or someone you live with might be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19

### If you decide to travel:

- Get your flu shot before you go
- Use online or contactless reservations and check-in wherever possible
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Bring extra supplies, such as masks and hand sanitizer; Pack food and water in case restaurants and stores are closed, or if drive-through, take-out, and outdoor-dining options aren't available.
- Consider disinfecting your travel lodgings before unpacking
- Consider taking the stairs. Otherwise wait to use the elevator until you can either ride alone or only with people from your household.

### After you travel

- You and your travel companions (including children) pose a risk to family, friends, and community for 14 days if you were exposed to the virus during your travels. **Persons arriving in California from other states or countries from, including returning California residents, should practice self-quarantine for 14 days after arrival. These persons should limit their interactions to their immediate household only.**
- Stay home as much as possible
- Avoid being around people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19
- Consider getting tested for COVID-19 (remember that a negative test result is not a guarantee that you are not infected so you should complete your entire 14 day self-quarantine regardless of the outcome of your test)

**Tips for staying overnight or hosting overnight guests (Staying with or hosting guests overnight is NOT RECOMMENDED and is considered a higher risk activity)**

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- Visitors should launder clothing and mask, and stow luggage away from common areas upon arrival.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially upon arrival.
- Wear masks while inside the house. Masks may be removed for eating, drinking, and sleeping, but individuals from different households should stay at least 6 feet away from each other at all times.
- Improve ventilation by opening windows and doors or by placing central air and heating on continuous circulation.
- Spend time together outdoors. Take a walk or sit outdoors at least 6 feet apart for interpersonal interactions.
- Avoid singing or shouting, especially indoors.
- Treat pets as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people outside the household.
- Monitor hosts and guests for symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Hosts and guests should have a plan for what to do if someone becomes sick.

## Shopping:

- Shop online sales at your favorite local retailer the day after Thanksgiving and days leading up to the winter holidays to avoid crowds
- Avoid enclosed spaces, especially if crowded
- Use contactless services for purchased items, like curbside pick-up
- Shop in open air markets and stay 6 feet away from others; leave if crowded and plan to come back during non-peak hours if you must

## Know where to get reliable information:

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding the novel coronavirus. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in Long Beach, will always be distributed by the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services through press releases, social media and our website.

- Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services
  - <http://longbeach.gov/covid19>
  - Social media: @LBHealthDept
  - Call the Long Beach COVID-19 Information Line at (562) 570-4636

Other reliable sources of information about novel coronavirus are:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
  - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
  - Social media: @lapublichealth
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
  - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>