

NEWS BRIEF

Provided by: Wheeler & Taylor Insurance

CDC Issues Updated Guidance for Thanksgiving Celebrations

As COVID-19 cases continue to surge across the country, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued updated guidelines for safely celebrating Thanksgiving this year.

These updated guidelines focus on remaining safe during small gatherings, which the CDC points to as being a contributor to the current increase in COVID-19 cases.

As a reminder, the CDC's guidelines are not meant to replace—but rather supplement—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules and regulations with which all gatherings must comply.

What's the Safest Way to Celebrate?

The guidelines reiterate that the safest way to celebrate is with people from your household or virtually.

Considerations for In-person Celebrations

Gathering with people who are not from your household poses varying levels of risk. If you're considering attending or hosting an in-person celebration for Thanksgiving, there are some things you need to consider, which include:

- **Community levels of COVID-19**—Do you live in an area that's experiencing a high number of COVID-19 cases? Are other attendees coming from highly affected areas?
- **Potential exposure during travel**—In addition to considering the community levels of COVID-19, consider your or other attendees' level of exposure during travel.

- **Location of gathering (indoor or outdoor)**—Indoor gatherings are considered to be a higher-risk activity than outdoor activities.

This holiday season, consider how your holiday plans can be modified to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to keep your friends, families and communities healthy and safe.

- **Duration of gathering**—Generally speaking, the longer you're in contact with someone who has COVID-19, the more likely it is that you will get it too.
- **Number of people expected to attend**—Although the CDC doesn't have a limit or recommended amount of guests per gathering, the more people attending an event increases the risk for COVID-19 spread.
- **Behaviors of attendees prior to gathering**—If attendees have not been practicing social distancing, wearing masks or following hand-washing guidance, the risk for COVID-19 spread is greater.
- **Behaviors of attendees during gathering**—If social distancing, mask-wearing and hand-washing behaviors are not followed during

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Those Who Should Not Attend or Host an In-person Celebration

The CDC's guidelines explain that certain people should not attend in-person celebrations for Thanksgiving.

- **High-risk guests**—Individuals who are at a higher risk for severe illness, or live or work with a high-risk individual, should avoid attending or hosting in-person celebrations. Those who are considered to be at an increased risk include:
 - Older adults
 - People with underlying health conditions
- **Symptomatic guests**—Those who have symptoms of COVID-19 or are waiting to receive results of a viral COVID-19 test should not attend or host in-person celebrations.
- **Guests who have or have been exposed to COVID-19**—Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive should not attend or host in-person celebrations.

Carefully consider your personal situation and decide whether it's safe for you and others to attend or host an in-person Thanksgiving celebration.

Guidelines for Safely Hosting an In-person Gathering

If you are hosting an in-person Thanksgiving celebration, keep these tips from the CDC in mind to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Sit and eat outside, if possible. If an outdoor gathering isn't feasible, try to keep windows open during the indoor gathering.
- Limit the number of guests you invite.

- Set safety expectations with guests ahead of time (e.g., mask-wearing, social distancing and hand-washing expectations).
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces and items between use.
- Consider asking guests to bring their own food, drink and utensils.
- If sharing food, have one person serve food, and use single-use utensils.
- Limit the number of people in food preparation areas.

In addition to the above guidelines, be sure to promote social distancing at your gathering whenever possible; encourage guests to wear masks; and have soap and water, or hand sanitizer available for guests to clean their hands.

Guidelines for Attending an In-person Gathering

If you're attending an in-person celebration, keep these tips in mind to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Bring your own food, drink, utensils, plates and cups.
- Wear a mask whenever possible.
- Avoid areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as the kitchen.
- Use single-use plates, drinkware and flatware when possible.

In addition to these guidelines, be sure to practice social distancing and hand-washing techniques while at the gathering.

Guidelines for Traveling

If you're traveling for Thanksgiving, be sure to check travel restrictions before leaving and keep these tips in mind:

- Get your flu shot before you travel. Contact

your doctor or click [here](#) to see where flu shots are available.

- Wear a mask in public settings and when on public transportation.
- Practice social distancing by staying at least 6 feet apart from people you don't live with.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitizer.
- Do not touch your mask, eyes, nose and mouth.
- Bring extra masks, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes.

In addition, avoid making any unnecessary stops while traveling to limit your potential exposure as much as possible.

What to Do if You Were Potentially Exposed While Traveling or Celebrating Thanksgiving

If you were exposed to COVID-19 at a holiday gathering, the CDC recommends that you self-quarantine for 14 days and consider getting tested for COVID-19, even if you don't have any symptoms.

While quarantining, monitor your symptoms and contact a doctor or hospital immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Trouble breathing
- Constant pain or pressure in your chest
- Bluish lips or face
- Sudden confusion

Click [here](#) for a full list of COVID-19 symptoms.

What's Next?

Although the holidays are generally a time of getting together and celebrating, the CDC is urging everyone to be smart this year in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Again, the safest way to celebrate during the pandemic is to do so virtually or with members of your own household. If you choose to celebrate at an in-person gathering with those outside of your household, be sure to keep the CDC's guidelines in mind to stay as safe as possible.