



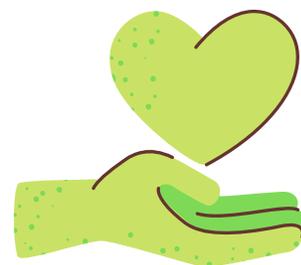
Walworth County Public Health Holiday Season Guidance

The holidays bring opportunities to celebrate special traditions and meaningful moments with the people in our lives. As we begin to prepare for November and December holidays -- including but not limited to: Día de Los Muertos; Diwali; Kwanzaa; Thanksgiving; Hanukkah; Christmas Eve/Christmas; and New Year's Eve -- this guidance can help protect you, your family, friends, and your community from COVID-19.

Walworth County Public Health **advises for families not to gather with those beyond their immediate household during this holiday season.** If you choose to gather with members outside of your immediate household, the department offers the following considerations to help keep our friends, families, and communities safe during COVID-19.

General Recommendations for Gatherings and Events

Please remember that *anytime* you gather with people you do not live with, the risk of infection increases for everyone. Consider if an event may increase the risk of infection for people in high-risk groups (particularly older adults and people with underlying health conditions) and consider offering a virtual celebration instead. While we don't recommend you gather, only consider an in-person gathering if planners and participants can commit to keeping at least 6 feet of space between people from different households (social distancing) and face coverings being worn at all times.



- **Stay home** (and remind others to stay home) if you do not feel well or are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19 (Resource #2 on last page).



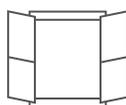
- **Keep gatherings small**, and only with members of your immediate household. If certain family members are returning to the house after being away (vacation, college, etc.) they should maintain social distancing and wear a mask at all times possible.



- **Hold small gatherings outside, if possible.** Wear a mask indoors and outdoors if gathering with anyone that does not live with you.



- **Wear masks and stay 6 feet away** from other guests that do not live with you.



- **Open windows and/or doors** to allow air to flow if gathering indoors..



- Remember who came to the gathering. **Keep a list of invited guests** in case one of them gets COVID19. This list will be helpful if you're contacted by a health department case interviewer.

Food and Beverages

For many, the holidays include having family and friends together to share a meal. The following are tips to help with safer meal preparation and serving.

General

- Limit the number of people so that everyone can practice social distancing before, during, and after the meal.
- To the extent reasonably possible, consider taking advantage of outdoor gatherings as weather permits.
- Small indoor social gatherings should maintain 6 feet of distance, before, during, and after the meal.
- Consider single-use disposable utensils and dishware for serving and eating meals.
- Encourage guests to wear a mask except to eat and to drink. Have an extra supply of masks, disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol, and tissues on hand.
- Wash and disinfect guest areas before and after holiday gatherings.

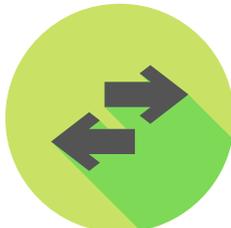
Food Prep

In general, it is important to follow basic steps to help prevent foodborne illness:

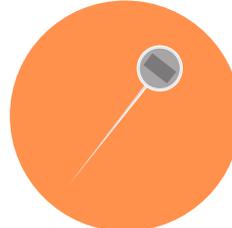
Clean



Separate



Cook



Chill



Those steps include washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after preparing, serving, and eating food, which will also help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food 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 mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus is spread.



If part of the meal gathering includes family members preparing the meal, now is a time to get creative. Plan ahead and assign each household a traditional or favorite dish to prepare in advance. Food may be prepared in individual servings so as to avoid buffet-style serving. Think of ways to emphasize cultural and family traditions by connecting virtually for planning to prepare favorite family recipes.

Serving and Dining

- Encourage guests to **bring food and drinks for themselves** and for members of their own household only.
- **Wear a mask while preparing or serving food** to others who don't live in your household.
- **Use single-use options** or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, plates and utensils, and condiments.
- **Avoid any self-serve food or drink options**, such as buffets or buffet-style potlucks, salad bars, and condiment or drink stations.

Food Prep and Clean Up

- **Wash and disinfect items that are reused.**
- **Limit the number of people that go in and out** of areas where food is prepared or handled.
- **Limit gathering in the kitchen and clean-up areas** to same household members.

Restrooms

- **Make a clear path to the bathroom.**
- **Mark areas** where people may need to line up to ensure social distancing.
- Provide an **ample supply of hand sanitizer, or soap** and water.
- **Clean bathroom regularly** following cleaning and disinfection protocol.
- **Use disposable paper towels.**



Music and Dancing

Dancing has a higher risk of spreading COVID-19 because vigorous physical activity results in heavier breathing. With high exertion and breathing, the potential for more respiratory droplets to be released in the air is increased. Because of this, dancing at social gatherings and events is not recommended. If you choose to include dancing as a part of your event, maximize safety for attendees by following these precautions:

- Everyone **wear face coverings while dancing** at the event.
- **Practice social distancing, at least 6 feet apart.**
- Consider **limiting dancing to ceremonial dances** with designated participants according to your particular tradition and culture.

Overnight Guests

If you plan to have or be an overnight guest, the host and guests should communicate about what is expected ahead of time. As a host, it is important to prepare sleeping areas and bathing accommodations. If necessary, discuss appropriate schedules for the use of commonly shared facilities.

- Make sure everyone understands the importance of **wearing a mask and social distancing**.
- **Offer additional masks, hand sanitizers, cleaning supplies, paper towels, and single-use items (e.g., individual soaps, toiletries, wipes, etc.).**
- **Ensure that soap and sanitizer are available**, and clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Encourage your **guests to help maintain and disinfect high-use surfaces**.
- **Individual items** such as bathing towels, hand towels, or paper hand towels should be made available.
- **Opening windows in the house slightly** for fresh air can help with the quality of indoor ventilation.
- Consider the health of those in your home and those visiting, including older adults and individuals with medical conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness. **Identify a room where an individual can isolate** should they develop symptoms or test positive while visiting.

Invited guests should stay home if they have been exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days or are showing COVID-19 symptoms. Invited guests who live with people who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 should think about any added risks to their loved ones.

Travel

Walworth County Public Health advises against traveling this holiday season. If you choose to travel this holiday season, consider the mode of transportation (plane, car, bus, train), the dates you will be traveling, and your risk to COVID-19 exposure while traveling.

- **Carry a small personal sanitizing kit** that contains hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and extra masks.
- **Always wear a mask in public, wash your hands frequently, and practice social distancing** when around others not from your household.
- **Be aware of the risk level of your destination.**
- **Driving your own vehicle will reduce your exposure to COVID-19.** If you need to use commercial or public transportation, be aware of and try to avoid the busiest travel times. **Consider traveling during non-peak times** when there are likely to be fewer people.
- When possible, to accommodate travel and schedules, **consider hosting celebrations on a different day, week, or month to allow for travel during less popular times.** Also, reconsider travel during the holiday season and consider holding special remote gatherings or small gatherings at home.



- **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 or has symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been asked to quarantine, delay your travel until after the full 14 days of quarantine, even if you don't have symptoms. If you test positive for COVID-19 while at your destination, isolate yourself from others for a minimum of 10 days and delay your return.
- **Review travel safety guidelines before traveling.** Driving is a lower-risk travel option compared to flying. Both the host and guests should try to limit their activities and exposure opportunities during the two weeks before the visit; the best option is for the host and guests to quarantine for 14 days before seeing each other to minimize the risk of exposure. The host and guest should frequently self-check for any symptoms before, during, and after the visit. If staying at a hotel or rented facility, check beforehand on the safety precautions that are taken to protect you and your family. This should include wearing masks, social distancing, and regular cleaning and disinfection.
- **Wear a mask in the lobby or other common areas** and minimize use of areas that may lead to close contact such as lounging areas, fitness centers, and pools.
- It is important to **discuss your expectations with friends and family** while celebrating the holidays during this COVID-19 pandemic. For example, suggest that handshakes and hugs be replaced with waves, verbal greetings, "air high-fives," or "air hugs." Communicate social distancing within the home and wearing a mask on a regular basis.

Shopping

General

- **Stay home if you have tested positive or have symptoms of COVID-19**, which can include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms.
- Consider **postponing in-person holiday shopping** when COVID-19 activity is high for your area
- **Use social distancing** (stay at least 6 feet away from others) when shopping. Wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- **Use hand sanitizer after leaving stores.** Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

Consider alternative ways to purchase gifts other than visiting stores in person, where possible. If you are planning a holiday shopping trip, look up COVID-19 activity in the community. Use the Walworth County Community Data Dashboards on the Walworth County website: <https://www.co.walworth.wi.us/887/Walworth-County-COVID-19-Data> to look up risk of COVID-19 activity in community while also considering the risk level of the shopping activity (lower, moderate or high risk).

Lower Risk

- **Consider shopping online.** Many retailers have options for online shopping, contactless curbside or drive-up pick-up. If using in-person contactless pick-up, you and the retail personnel should wear masks.

Moderate Risk

- If you choose to shop in-person, **wear your mask and maintain 6 feet of distance** between you and others.
- Try to **shop at off-peak times** when there are fewer shoppers. Many retailers disinfect their carts or offer sanitizing wipes to allow you to wipe down the cart.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose** with unwashed hands. Prepare a list to help avoid handling items you don't plan to purchase.
- **Use touchless payment if possible** or sanitize your hands after purchasing with cash or utilizing a credit or debit card keypad.
- **Bring hand sanitizer and handwipes** with you.
- Be sure to **sanitize upon entrance and exit from stores** and wash your hands for 20 seconds upon your return home.
- **Store a well-stocked "sanitizing kit" in your vehicle** that includes hand sanitizer, wipes, disinfectant spray, mask, and paper towels.



High Risk

- **In-person sale promotions or holiday activities** that encourage large crowds and lining up for limited supply deals, which make social distancing a challenge.
- **Shopping with a non-household member;** if this is done, make sure to wear a mask, including when driving.
- Santa Claus, and other holiday visits should be avoided, but should include **mask and social distancing** to the extent possible.
- **Individuals who have symptoms**, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, or are waiting for test results should not shop in-person.

Resources

1. CDC: Considerations for Events and Gatherings (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html)
2. CDC: Stay home if you do not feel well or are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19. See CDC: People at Increased Risk (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html)
3. CDC: Event Planning and COVID-19: Questions and Answers (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html)
4. Minnesota Department of Health, Guidance for Safe Celebrations and Events <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safeevents.pdf>
5. Illinois Department of Public Health, COVID-19 Holiday Season Safety Tips http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID-19_Guidance%20Holidays.pdf



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