

Celebrating Holidays during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The holiday season typically involves travel, gatherings of family and friends, indoor religious services, and parties, all of which present new risks this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. How can you maintain the most important aspects of your holiday celebrations without putting yourself or vulnerable family members in danger from serious illness? The answers will be different for every family and every individual. Here are some ideas for enjoying the holidays in different ways this year.

Lowest risk

- Limit in-person gatherings to people from your immediate household
- Include other family members and friends by phone or video
- Select key elements of your holiday traditions and modify them to be safe during the pandemic:
 - Prepare traditional family recipes for family and friends who live nearby and deliver them in a way that does not involve contact
 - Make holiday cookies early and mail them to people who won't be with you in person
 - Share recipes ahead of time so virtual participants can prepare some of the same food at holiday meals
 - Watch a holiday movie together
 - Have a virtual cookie-decorating party
- Think of new holiday traditions this year to make your celebrations meaningful and fun even if you can't all be together

Moderate risk

- Limit in-person gatherings to people from your immediate household
- Include distant family members by phone or video to limit the risk of virus transmission during travel and the spread of COVID-19 between regions. If family members do travel from a distance,

they should follow guidelines to minimize risk during travel and self-isolate for a period of time on arrival.

- Gather outdoors if the weather allows. If gathering indoors, increase ventilation by opening windows and doors, weather permitting
- Ask that attendees avoid contact with people outside their households for two weeks before the gathering
- Communicate expectations about safety guidelines to be followed during the gathering:
 - Maintain physical distancing
 - Wear masks, even inside, when in the company of people not in your household
 - Wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizers
 - Avoid handshakes, hugs or fist bumps
 - Sanitize door handles, bathroom surfaces and handles and other surfaces after every use.
 - Don't share serving utensils -- have one person serve everyone or have each household group bring its own food and utensils and serve themselves separately

High-risk activities to avoid

- Large indoor gatherings with people from outside your household
- Shopping in crowded stores just before or during the holidays
- Attending crowded outdoor events



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