

How COVID-19 Has Impacted Holiday Shopping Habits

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The pandemic has resulted in a change in how people shop, even as consumers are becoming more mindful of where they spend their money and care more about hygienic packaging, eco-friendly products and how companies treat their employees.

This year's holiday shoppers are showing a commitment to gift-giving because, more than ever, people are wanting to extend kindness to others and make up for lack of experiences in 2020. The American Marketing Association (AMA) has studied holiday shoppers and expects consumers will shop differently this holiday season:

In-person shoppers:

- Will plan to shop earlier to avoid crowds
- Will consolidate buying to make fewer trips to stores
- More than half will check whether an item is in stock before heading to the store
- Will opt for brands and stores that ease their pandemic-related concerns
- Prioritize shopping at stores that offer a contactless experience
- Plan to support local, small businesses

Online shoppers:

- Plan to purchase online and pick up curbside
- Will make more online purchases this year
- Will shop less in stores for fear of COVID-19 exposure

- Spent a record-setting \$9 billion on Black Friday, and an increase of 21.6% over 2019
- Broke Cyber Monday records by spending \$10.8 billion – up 15% from last year. According to Adobe Analytics, this was the largest online shopping day in U.S. history.

More Americans plan to continue online shopping even after the COVID-19 health crisis ends. Following are the categories expected to see the most growth:

- **30-49% growth:** Groceries, alcohol, household supplies, personal care products, over-the-counter medicine
- **15-29% growth:** Apparel, skin care and makeup, vitamins and supplements, fitness and wellness
- **0-14% growth:** At-home entertainment, consumer electronics, books, magazines and newspaper

Whether you're a holiday shopping enthusiast or a Scrooge, please be safe and follow the sidebar tips to have a happy, healthy holiday season.

Tips to Ensure Your Holidays are Healthy Days

If you plan to venture out this season, please follow these guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Use online services or curbside pick-up as much as possible.
- Wear a mask and make sure it covers your nose and mouth.
- Take care when touching surfaces and use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before entering and after leaving stores.
- Avoid touching your face mask, eyes, nose and mouth.
- Shop during hours when fewer people will be out (early morning or late night).
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness, find out if the store has special hours for those at risk.
- If you normally bring your own reusable shopping bags, ensure they are cleaned before each use. Some locations have temporarily banned the use of reusable shopping bags during the COVID-19 pandemic, so check your state, local, store or market policies before bringing reusable bags.
- Disinfect the shopping cart, use disinfecting wipes if available.
- Use marked entry or exit points and follow any directional signs or floor markings designed to keep people at least 6 feet apart.
- Only touch products that you plan to purchase, if possible.

- Consider not consuming any sample or purchase food or drink items from self-service stations.
- If possible, use touchless payment (pay without touching money, a card, or a keypad). If you must handle money, a card, or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer right after paying.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when returning home.