

Safer Celebrations during COVID-19: Holidays and Other Gatherings

Gathering requirements and recommendations

In general, MDH encourages postponing large celebrations and events until there is less community spread of COVID-19.

However, we know that holidays, festivals, and get-togethers are how Minnesotans celebrate the people, history, and events we care about. All of our celebrations, from holidays to sharing a meal with friends, are important expressions of culture, faith, and connection.

Because of COVID-19, holidays, celebrations, and social gatherings need to look different. Anytime you get together with people who do not live with you, even in someone's home, the risk of getting COVID-19 goes up for everyone.

If you gather with people from other households, remember to:

- Wear a mask, whether at indoor or outdoor gatherings.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Gather in an area with good ventilation. If indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible.
- Cover coughs and sneezes, and wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Write down the guest list in case someone tests positive for COVID-19 afterward and others at the gathering need to know.

Fully vaccinated people may be able to gather without masks and social distancing in specific situations ([Gatherings for people who have been vaccinated](#)).

Starting March 15, 2021, [Executive Order 21-11](#) requires all Minnesotans to:

- Limit indoor social gatherings to no more than 15 people total, and stay 6 feet apart from anyone you don't live with.
- Limit outdoor social gatherings to no more than 50 people total, and stay 6 feet apart from anyone you don't live with.

- Private celebrations, including receptions related to weddings and funerals, must be limited to 50% of the venue's normal capacity, up to 250 people.

If you are sick, waiting for COVID-19 test results, or were in close contact of someone who has COVID-19, stay home and do not attend a social gathering.

If you plan to gather with others, lay low before you go. Help keep loved ones safe by staying at home and only seeing people who live with you for at least 14 days before you gather. That is how long it can take to get sick after being close to someone with COVID-19. Staying home keeps you from spreading the disease when you have it, but do not know it yet. Getting tested for COVID-19 is recommended for anyone at any time. However, even if you get tested, you should still stay home and only see people who live with you for at least 14 days before gathering with people from other households.

Gatherings for people who have been vaccinated

If you have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and it has been at least 2 weeks since the final dose of vaccine (enough time for your body to develop immunity), you have good protection against illness for yourself. However, we're still learning how vaccines will affect the spread of COVID-19. It is important to follow the recommendations below when gathering with an unvaccinated person or a household with anyone at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

If you've been fully vaccinated:

- You can gather indoors with smaller groups of **fully vaccinated** people without wearing a mask. Avoid larger gatherings.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from **one** other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks, **unless** any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Choosing safer activities

It is especially important this year to find safer ways to connect with others and help stop the spread of COVID-19. Help keep friends and family safe by choosing lower-risk activities.

Low-risk activities

- **Meals at home** with the people who live with you.
- **Getting outside** with the people who live with you or who have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19.
- **Shopping online or doing curbside pickup** rather than going inside a store.
- **Preparing food** for family and neighbors and delivering without contact, especially for those who are most likely to get very sick with COVID-19.
- **Virtual gatherings with family and friends**, such as movie nights, dinner, crafts, or trivia.

More risk: Seeing others

- **A small outdoor gathering** with no more than 50 people.
- **A small indoor gathering** with no more than 15 people.

High-risk: Going to crowded places

Avoid these activities to help stop the spread of COVID-19:

- **Shopping in crowded stores.**
- **Going to indoor gatherings** with people from many different households.
- **Going to a crowded bar, restaurant, party, or concert either indoors or outdoors**, where you cannot keep at least 6 feet from others.
- **Traveling between states.** For more information on traveling, see [Protect Yourself & Others: Traveling](#).