

Stay Safe This Holiday Season

COVID-19 continues to spread at high levels across the state. As we head into the New Year, take these steps for safer in-person gatherings:

- Get Vaccinated. Minnesotans age 5 and up can be vaccinated. Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones this holiday season—especially those who can't be vaccinated and children under 5. Find vaccines for the whole family at mn.gov/vaccine.

- Get Boosted. All Minnesotans 16 and older should get a booster when they are due (6 months after receiving Pfizer and Moderna, and 2 months after receiving Johnson & Johnson). Researchers believe the Omicron variant is more transmissible than previous variants, but getting fully vaccinated and boosted significantly increases protection against severe illness or death from infection.

- Get Tested. Even if you're not experiencing any symptoms, test before holiday gatherings to make sure you're not spreading the virus to loved ones unknowingly. Take advantage of one of the many free testing options the state has to offer, or head to your local clinic or pharmacy. If you are using an over the counter at-home rapid test, use it as close to your gathering as possible. If you test positive, no matter what kind of test, stay home. If you test negative, you should get tested again if you develop symptoms. Testing options are available at mn.gov/covid19.

- Stay Safe. Wear your mask while traveling and in indoor public settings like a grocery store, a shopping mall, or a school. Wash your hands and do your best to avoid crowded indoor spaces before getting together with family and friends—especially high-risk loved ones and children under 5 who can't be vaccinated. Know the vaccination status of those with whom you are gathering to make sure the whole family is safer when together.

- Stay Home. If you are sick or test positive for COVID-19, stay home and away from others. If you are exposed to COVID-19, follow the quarantine and testing recommendations at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html>.