

Talking Points for the Holiday Season

TOPLINE: With colder weather moving people indoors and pandemic fatigue setting in, COVID cases, fatalities and hospitalization are rising faster than ever before. This holiday season, we can take measures to slow the spread and keep ourselves and loved ones safe.

A vaccine is on the way, but in the meantime, we cannot succumb to pandemic fatigue. We all need to hang in there a little longer and continue to take measures to protect ourselves and others.

- Remember the 3Ws: **Wash** your hands, **Watch** your distance, and **Wear** a Mask.
- Many people who have COVID-19 don't show symptoms, and may spread it without knowing it. It's critical for each of us to wear a mask to protect ourselves and others.
- While schools, the workplace and transportation have adopted effective mitigation measures, household gatherings continue to be a driving source for COVID spread.
- Many hospitalizations have resulted from household gatherings. So while young folks may recover quickly, spending time at home with extended family and friends can increase the risk of spread and put high-risk individuals at greater risk of hospitalization.
- Our goal is to slow the spread, decrease hospitalizations, and decrease fatalities while keeping the economy open. If we want to go to work, go to school, eat at a restaurant - we cannot let our sense of personal accountability slip.

Holiday parties and household gatherings are at risk of being super spreader events. You can take preventative steps to keep yourself, your family and friends safe.

- Be creative and think about what you CAN do to stay safe! Celebrate only with members of your household, eat outside if you can, host a virtual meal, shop online, prepare and deliver a meal for a neighbor.
- Know your risk. If hosting a holiday gathering, limit the number of attendees and check the infection rates of the areas from which attendees are traveling from. Use this knowledge to inform you as to whether you should have a holiday gathering.
- At gatherings that include people of different households, everyone should always wear a mask that covers both the mouth and nose, except when eating and drinking. Remember that wearing a mask protects you and your loved ones.
- Host and attend outdoor gatherings. Indoor gatherings, especially those with poor ventilation, generally pose more risk than outdoor gatherings.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows and doors to the extent it is safe and feasible based on the weather – or by placing central air/heating systems on continuous circulation.

Testing is a critical component in our battle against COVID-19. The more symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals we identify, the sooner we can take action to keep our families and community safe.

- If you attend a holiday party or gathering of more than 10 people, in communities where cases are surging, you should talk to your doctor about getting tested.¹
- If you or your loved ones are worried you may have come into contact with COVID-19, please make an appointment to get tested.
- If you do get tested, you should self-quarantine/isolate at home pending test results and follow the advice of your health care provider or a public health professional.
- You can visit your [state](#) or [local](#) health department's website to look for the latest local information on testing.

¹ CDC COVID Testing Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html>