

Guidance for Celebrating Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving will undoubtedly need to be different this fall to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Traditionally, many families travel long distances to celebrate Thanksgiving together, but this year, **staying home** is the best way to protect yourself and others. [Travel](#) increases the chance of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

Avoid flying and if you must travel, be informed of the [risks involved](#). Even if you aren't travelling for the holiday, avoid activities like crowded, indoor dinners that are **high risk**, especially for seniors, immunocompromised individuals, and people with medical conditions. **Consider fun alternatives** that pose lower risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

Please visit <http://www.kycovid19.ky.gov> for guidance, incidence rate maps, and other information. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for holiday celebrations, including **Thanksgiving**, can be found on the [CDC's website](#).

Lower risk activities

- **Having a small dinner** with only people who live in your household
- **Preparing** traditional family recipes for family and neighbors, especially those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and delivering them in a way that doesn't involve contact with others
- **Having a virtual dinner** and sharing recipes with friends and family
- **Shopping online** rather than in person on the day after Thanksgiving or the next Monday
- **Watching** sports events, parades, and movies from home with only people who live in your household

Moderate risk activities

- **Having a small outdoor dinner** with family and friends who live in your community
 - Lower your risk by following CDC's recommendations on [hosting gatherings or cook-outs](#).
- **Visiting** pumpkin patches or orchards where people use hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks is required, and people are able to maintain social distancing
- **Attending a small outdoor** sports event with safety precautions in place

Higher risk activities

Avoid these higher risk activities to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19:

- **Going shopping** in crowded stores just before, on, or after Thanksgiving
- **Participating** or being a spectator at a crowded race or large sporting event
- **Attending** crowded parades
- **Using** drugs, or alcohol in excess, which can cloud judgement and urge risky behavior
- **Attending large indoor gatherings** with people from outside of your household

The risk of virus spread at holiday celebrations

Celebrating virtually or with members of your own household poses low risk for spread. In-person gatherings pose varying levels of risk. Event organizers and attendees should consider the risk of virus spread based on event size and use of mitigation strategies, as outlined in the [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#).

It is important to protect older individuals, immunocompromised people, and people with medical conditions. There are several factors that contribute to the risk of becoming infected or infecting others with the virus that causes COVID-19 at a holiday celebration. In combination, these factors will create various amounts of risk, so it is important to consider them individually and together:

- **Community levels of COVID-19** – Higher levels of COVID-19 cases and community spread in the gathering location, as well as where attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees. Family and friends should consider the number and rate of COVID-19 cases in their community and in the community where they plan to celebrate when considering whether to host or attend a holiday celebration. Information on the number of cases in an area can be found on the area's [health department](#) website.

- **The location of the gathering** – Indoor gatherings generally pose more risk than outdoor gatherings. Indoor gatherings with poor ventilation pose more risk than those with good ventilation, such as those with open windows or doors.
- **The duration of the gathering** – Gatherings that last longer pose more risk than shorter gatherings.
- **The number of people at the gathering** – Gatherings with more people pose greater risk than gatherings with fewer people. CDC does not have a limit or recommend a specific number of attendees for gatherings. The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, however, provided a directive on July 20, 2020 limiting gatherings to 10 people or fewer. https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200720_Order_Mass-Gatherings.pdf
- **The behaviors of attendees prior to the gathering** – Gatherings with attendees who are not adhering to social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart), wearing masks, washing hands, and engaging in other preventative behaviors pose more risk than gatherings with attendees who are engaging in these preventative behaviors.
- **The behaviors of attendees during the gathering** – Gatherings with more preventive measures in place, such as mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing, pose less risk than gatherings where fewer or no preventive measures are being implemented.

People who should not attend in-person holiday celebrations

People with or exposed to COVID-19

Do not host or participate in any in-person festivities if you or anyone in your household:

- Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has [not met the criteria for when it is safe to be around others](#)
- Has [symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Is waiting for COVID-19 [viral test](#) results
- May have been [exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days](#)
- Is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19

People at increased risk for severe illness

If you are at [increased risk of severe illness](#) from COVID-19, or live or work with someone at increased risk of severe illness, you should:

- **Avoid in-person gatherings** with people who do not live in your household.
- **Avoid larger gatherings** and consider attending activities that pose lower risk (as described previously) if you decide to attend an in-person gathering with people who do not live in your household.