

Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

Greene County Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) offers the following considerations and recommendations to help protect individuals and their families, friends, and communities from COVID-19.

As some communities in the United States begin to plan and hold events and gatherings, the CDC offers the following considerations for enhancing protection of individuals and communities and preventing spread of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2, or coronavirus). Event planners, officials and members of the general public can determine, in collaboration with [state and local health officials](#), whether and how to implement these considerations, making adjustments to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community. Because COVID-19 virus circulation varies in communities, these considerations are meant to supplement—**not replace**—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which gatherings must comply. Organizers should continue to assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees for gatherings.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A gathering refers to a planned or spontaneous event, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.
- The *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.
- The [higher the level of community transmission](#) in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.
- The size of an event or gathering should be determined based on state, local, territorial or tribal safety laws and regulations.

Celebrating virtually or with members of your own household poses low risk for spread. In-person gatherings pose varying levels of risk. There are several factors that contribute to the risk of getting infected or infecting others with the virus that causes COVID-19 at a holiday celebration.

The risk of COVID-19 spreading at events and gatherings increases as follows:

Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.

More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).

Higher risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.

Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

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.
- **The location of the gathering** – Indoor gatherings with poor ventilation generally pose more risk than outdoor gatherings, or those facilities 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** – Social gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people by state order. You can find the order on the state of Ohio's site [here](#).
- **The locations attendees are traveling from** – Gatherings with attendees who are traveling from different places pose a higher risk than gatherings with attendees who live in the same area. Higher levels of COVID-19 cases and community spread in the gathering location, or where attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees.
- **The behaviors of attendees prior to the gathering** – Gatherings with attendees who are not adhering to social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart), mask wearing, hand washing, and other prevention 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.

Keep in mind those friends and/or family members 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.

Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

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



CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOSTING OR ATTENDING A GATHERING

If you will be **hosting** a gathering during the holiday season that brings people who live in different households together, follow [CDC tips for hosting gatherings](#). If you will be **attending** a gathering that someone else is hosting, follow [CDC Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#). Below are some general considerations for hosting a gathering that brings together people from different households. Guests should be aware of these considerations and ask their host what mitigation measures will be in place during the gathering. Hosts should consider the following:

- Check the COVID-19 infection rates in areas where attendees live on [state](#), [local](#), [territorial](#), or [tribal](#) health department websites. Based on the current status of the pandemic, consider if it is safe to hold or attend the gathering on the proposed date.
- Limit the number of attendees as much as possible to allow people from different households to remain at least [6 feet](#) apart at all times. Guests should avoid direct contact, including handshakes and hugs, with others not from their household.
- Host outdoor rather than indoor gatherings as much as possible. Even outdoors, require guests to wear masks when not eating or drinking.
- Avoid holding gatherings in crowded, poorly ventilated spaces with persons who are not in your household.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows and doors to the extent that is safe and feasible based on the weather, or by placing central air and heating on continuous circulation.
 - For additional information on increasing ventilation, visit CDC's information on [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home](#).
 - Winter weather can be cold, wet, and unpredictable. Inclement weather makes it difficult to increase ventilation by opening windows or to hold an event outdoors.
- If setting up outdoor seating under a pop-up open air tent, ensure guests are still seated with physical distancing in mind. Enclosed 4-wall tents will have less air circulation than open air tents. If outdoor temperature or weather forces you to put up the tent sidewalls, consider leaving one or more sides open or rolling up the bottom 12" of each sidewall to enhance ventilation while still providing a wind break.
- Require guests to wear masks. At gatherings that include persons of different households, everyone should always wear a [mask](#) that covers both the mouth and nose, except when eating or drinking. It is also important to stay at least [6 feet away](#) from people who are not in your household at all times.
- Encourage guests to avoid singing or shouting, especially indoors. Keep music levels down so people don't have to shout or speak loudly to be heard.
- Encourage attendees to [wash](#) their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide guests information about any COVID-19 safety guidelines and steps that will be in place at the gathering to prevent the spread of the virus.

Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

- Provide and/or encourage attendees to bring supplies to help everyone to stay healthy. These include extra [masks](#) (do not share or swap with others), [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol, and tissues. Stock bathrooms with enough hand soap and single use towels.
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items such as serving utensils.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use when feasible. Use [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) [external icon](#).
- Use touchless garbage cans if available. Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands after removing gloves.
- Plan ahead and ask guests to avoid contact with people outside of their households for 14 days before the gathering.
- Treat [pets](#) as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people outside the household.

The more of these prevention measures that you put in place, the safer your gathering will be. No one measure is enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



FOOD AND DRINKS AT SMALL HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way that the virus is spread. Remember, it is always important to follow good hygiene to reduce the risk of illness from common foodborne germs.

- Encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves and for members of their own household only; avoid potluck-style gatherings.
- Wear a mask while preparing food for or serving food to others who don't live in your household.
- All attendees should have a plan for where to [store their mask](#) while eating and drinking. Keep it in a dry, breathable bag (like a paper or mesh fabric bag) to keep it clean between uses.
- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill, if possible.
- Have one person who is wearing a mask serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, plates and utensils, and condiments.
- Make sure everyone [washes their hands](#) with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after preparing, serving, and eating food and after taking trash out. Use [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Designate a space for guests to wash hands after handling or eating food.

Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

- Limit crowding in areas where food is served by having one person dispense food individually to plates, always keeping a minimum of a 6-foot distance from the person whom they are serving. Avoid crowded buffet and drink stations. Change and launder linen items (e.g., seating covers, tablecloths, linen napkins) immediately following the event.
- Offer no-touch trash cans for guests to easily throw away food items.
- Wash dishes in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water immediately following the gathering.

TRAVEL AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

If you decide to travel, follow these safety measures during your trip to [protect yourself and others](#) from COVID-19:

- Wear a [mask](#) in public settings, like on public and mass transportation, at events and gatherings, and anywhere you will be around other people.
- Avoid close contact by [staying at least 6 feet apart](#) (about 2 arm lengths) from anyone who is not from your household.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your face mask, eyes, nose, and mouth.

[Travel](#) increases the chance of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAYING OVERNIGHT OR HOSTING OVERNIGHT GUESTS

Consider whether you, someone you live with, or anyone you plan to visit with is at [increased risk](#) for severe illness from COVID-19, to determine whether to stay overnight in the same residence or to stay elsewhere.

- [Assess risk for infection](#) based on how you or your visitor will travel.
- Consider and prepare for what you will do if you, or someone else, becomes [sick](#) during the visit. What are the plans for isolation, medical care, basic care, and travel home?

TIPS FOR STAYING OVERNIGHT OR HOSTING OVERNIGHT GUESTS

- Visitors should launder clothing and mask, and stow luggage away from common areas upon arrival.
- [Wash hands](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially upon arrival.
- Wear [masks](#) while inside the house. Masks may be removed for eating, drinking, and sleeping, but individuals from different households should stay at least [6 feet](#) away from each other at all times.
- Improve ventilation by opening windows and doors or by placing central air and heating on continuous circulation.

Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

- Spend time together outdoors. Take a walk or sit outdoors at [least 6 feet apart](#) for interpersonal interactions.
- Avoid singing or shouting, especially indoors.
- Treat [pets](#) as you would other human family members – do not let pets interact with people outside the household.
- Monitor hosts and guests for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Hosts and guests should have a plan for what to do if [someone becomes sick](#).

STEPS TO TAKE IF EXPOSED TO COVID-19 DURING A HOLIDAY GATHERING

If you are exposed to COVID-19 at a holiday gathering, while traveling, or at any time, quarantine yourself to protect others by doing the following:

- [Stay home for 14 days](#) after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Stay away from others, especially people who are at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- Watch for fever (100.4°F or higher), cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- Consider getting [tested](#) for COVID-19. Even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should still stay home (quarantine) for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. This is because symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus, and some infected people never have symptoms but are still contagious.
- Do not travel until 14 days after your last possible exposure.

If you can't completely stay away from others during the 14 days:

- Stay at [least 6 feet](#) (about 2 arm lengths) away from other people.
- Wear a [mask](#) that covers both the mouth and nose when you are outside of your home.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol).
- Monitor yourself and household members for [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- [Get information](#) about COVID-19 testing if you feel sick.

If you develop [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) *within 14 days of the event or celebration*, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or if you [test positive for COVID-19](#), immediately notify the host and others who attended. They may need to inform other attendees about their possible exposure to the virus. Contact your health care provider and follow the CDC-recommended steps for [what to do if you become sick](#), and follow the [public health recommendations for community-related exposure](#).

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, a [public health worker may contact you](#) to check on your health and ask you who you have been in contact with and where you've spent time in order to identify and provide

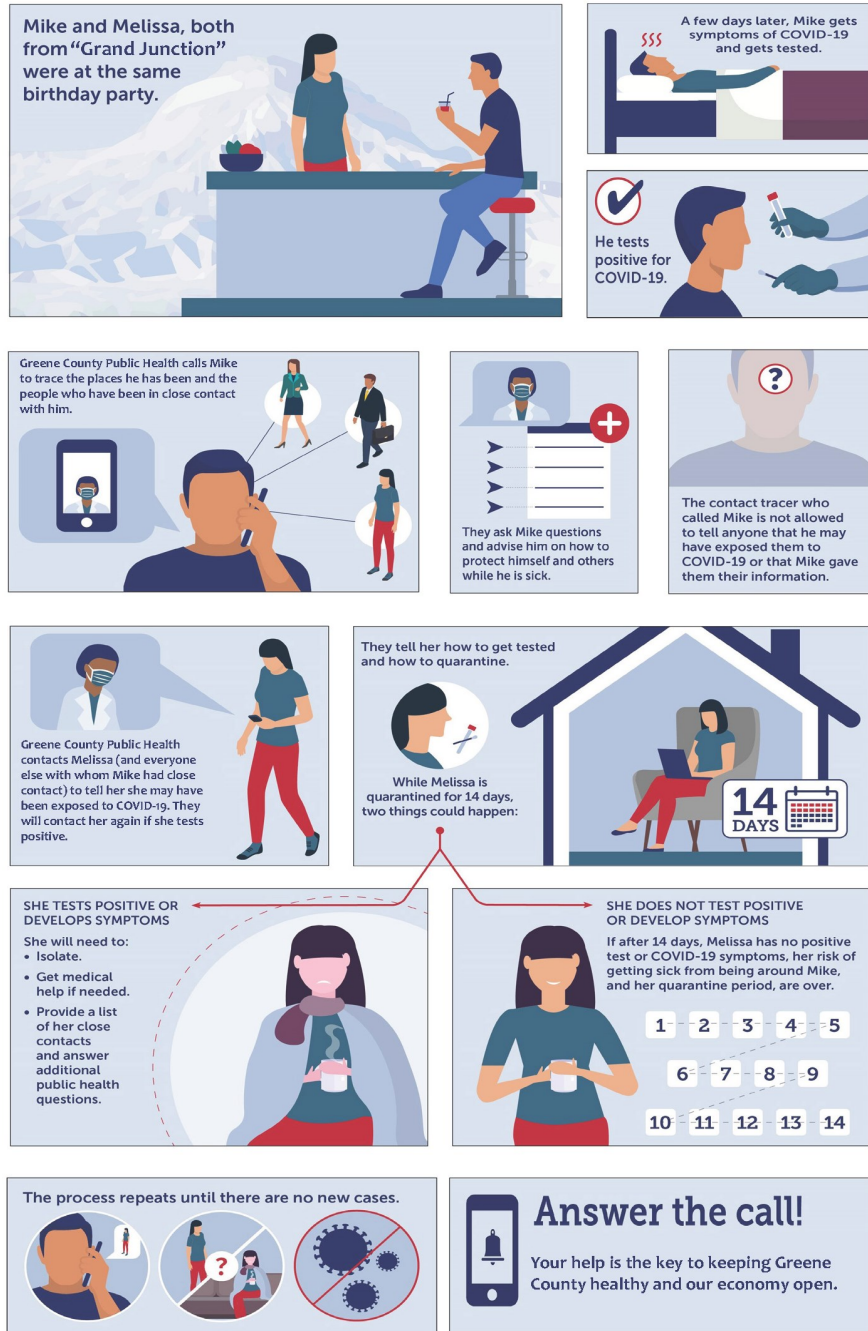


Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
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Public Health Guidance for *Holiday Celebrations 2020*

support to people (contacts) who may have been infected. Your information will be **confidential**. Learn more about [what to expect with contact tracing](#).

HOW CONTACT TRACING WORKS



**FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT [HEALTHALERT.GCPH.INFO/COVID19](https://healthalert.gcpd.info/covid19)
OR [CORONAVIRUS.OHIO.GOV](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov)**



The information for this guidance came from the following sites

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

The Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) COVID-19 site at www.coronavirus.ohio.gov