

Be Festive, Stay Safe!

Tips for a Safer Holiday Season



Make a plan to celebrate the holiday season safely. Be festive while protecting your loved ones and preventing the spread of COVID-19: Do not travel (rediscover holidays at home!); do not host or attend a holiday party (go virtual instead!); and do not gather in groups and only celebrate with household members (less is more!). Here are some tips on how to celebrate.

No matter how you celebrate, always practice these four key actions:

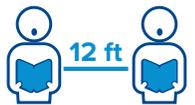
Stay home: Celebrate at home, especially if you aren't feeling well, tested positive for COVID-19, have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or were recently traveling.

Stay apart: Keep at least 6 feet from others. Do not attend holiday parties or other gatherings, especially indoors.

Wear a face covering: Protect those around you. You can have COVID-19 and not know it.

Keep your hands clean: Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands and cover your coughs and sneezes.

Safer holiday activities

- **Host a virtual party.** Celebrate with friends and family at a video dinner party. Kiss 2020 good-bye at a virtual New Year's ball or with a Tik-Tok dance. 
- **Deck the halls.** Put up decorations such as a tree, menorah, kinara, wreath, or lights. Walk around your neighborhood and enjoy the decorated homes and shops. Stop for a hot chocolate or cider to stay warm. 
- **Spread the holiday cheer.** Surprise your neighbor by dropping off some holiday cookies. Send snail-mail holiday cards to your co-workers or call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while. Invite someone who may be alone to join your virtual Thanksgiving or holiday dinner. 
- **Go caroling outdoors.** Give the gift of music. Wear a face covering and stay 12 feet from others (the virus can spread more easily when singing, so it is important to stand farther apart). 
- **Let it snow.** Make a snowperson, go sledding or snow shoeing or have a snowball fight. 
- **Holiday shopping.** Don't let Black Friday turn into COVID Monday! Shop online to avoid crowds (and a showdown over the last toy on the shelf) or call for curbside pick up at your favorite local store. If you shop in person, wear a face covering, use hand sanitizer, and go during off hours. 
- **Have a feast.** Have a turkey with all the trimmings. Eat some kugel, latkes, or sugar cookies, and have an eggnog – you've earned it!
- **Watch football and the Grinch.** Enjoy your TV traditions and do your best touchdown dance when your team scores. 



Religious Services

Attending indoor services can be risky since it often involves many people in a confined space. If you participate in religious services:

- **Go virtual or outside.** Join online services or worship outdoors.
- **Be prepared.** Bring and use hand sanitizer and make sure everyone over age 2 wears a face covering at all times.
- **Spread out.** Sit only with members of your household and keep at least 6 feet apart from others. Remember to stay 12 feet apart if there will be singing.
- **Bring your own (BYO).** Bring your own books of worship and ceremonial objects. Never drink from the same cup as others.



Gatherings

Gathering with other people, especially indoors, increases the risk of spreading COVID-19. Group settings make physical distancing difficult and it is not possible to wear a face covering when eating and drinking. Remember, people without symptoms can spread the virus. But if you're going to meet up with other people, party like it's 2020! This means:

- **Know your own risk:** If you are an older adult or have a health condition that increases your risk of severe COVID-19, stay home this holiday season.
- **Know others' risk:** Only meet up with people who you know are careful about using a face covering and keeping at least 6 feet from others.
- **Get tested.** Get a COVID-19 test **before** seeing older adults or others who may be at increased risk for severe COVID-19 and **after** you attend a gathering or travel.
- **Keep it small:** The more people that gather close together, the higher the risk of COVID-19.
- **Outdoors is safer:** Bundle up and celebrate outdoors. COVID-19 spreads easier inside because there is less air circulation. This is especially true in winter when doors and windows are shut.
- **Virtual hugs only.** Unfortunately, close physical contact with people from outside your home is not safe during COVID-19.
- **Keep your plate to yourself:** Don't share plates or glasses and skip the dip and other communal food this year.



Travel

You should not travel this year. Traveling puts you, your family, and your community at risk. Returning travelers can be a source of community outbreaks. But if you cannot avoid travel over the holidays:

- **Stay local.** This is the perfect year to enjoy the best city and state in the country.
- **Travel safely.** Keep distance from others, bring and use hand sanitizer, and make sure everyone over age 2 wears a face covering. See the Health Department's [Commuting Safely guidance](#) for more traveling rules of the road.
- **Get a room.** Stay at a hotel rather than at someone's home. If you have out-of-town guests, suggest they do the same.
- **Don't drink and drive.** It's a good move to sleep in your own home, but do not drink and drive to get there. Designate a driver. And if you are the driver and you've had too much to drink, walk, take the subway or call a car service.
- **Get tested and quarantine after travel.** If you travel to most other states or another country, you will need to quarantine when you return home. See [New York State's travel quarantine requirements](#) for more information.



Activities you definitely should not do:

- **Mistletoe:** Unless it's with your live-in partner, keep kissing to a minimum this year.
- **Use your neighbor's blow up snowperson for a dart board.** I know, it's tempting.
- **Have a snowball fight with a pitcher from the Yankees.** Snow is not soft at 95 miles per hour.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious or depressed, contact NYC Well, a free and confidential mental health support service available 24/7.

Call 888-NYCWELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173, or visit nyc.gov/nycwell.

