



City of St. Louis Holiday Gathering Guidelines

These guidelines, effective November 20, 2020, establish guidelines for holiday gatherings in the City of St. Louis. As we receive additional information about respiratory illness (COVID-19, influenza, etc.) trends in the City of St. Louis and St. Louis Region, and as more scientific and clinical information becomes available on the impact of COVID-19 in youth, these guidelines may be replaced or modified by the City of St. Louis Department of Health.

Guiding Principles

The holidays are a time for us to celebrate the things that we care about. While some are major U.S. holidays, others are celebrated in our diverse communities and are important expressions of culture, faith, and family connection. Each holiday is special and important, but holidays may need to look different this year.

Holiday Gatherings

COVID-19 can easily spread from one person to another during traditional holiday activities where we gather. No matter the holiday, we want it to be a safe one for you and your family.

Keep in mind that anytime you gather with people you do not live with you; the risk of infection increases for everyone. We ask that you protect your health and the health of your loved ones by doing the following:

- **For All Gatherings**
 - **Stay home if you do not feel well or are at higher risk** for getting very sick from COVID-19 ([CDC: People at Increased Risk](#)). Invited guests should stay home if they have been exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days or are showing COVID-19 symptoms. Guests who live with people who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 should think about any added risks to their loved ones.
 - **Wear a mask** if gathering with someone who lives outside your immediate household.
 - **Encourage guests to bring their own food, drinks, and treats.** Do not share utensils or drinking cups.
 - **Always stay at least 6 feet away** from people who do not live in your household.
 - **Remember who came to the gathering.** Keep a list of guests in case one of them gets COVID-19. This list will be helpful if you're contacted by a health department staff.



- Singing, chanting, shouting, and physical exertion significantly increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission because these activities increase the release of respiratory droplets into the air. Because of this, singing, chanting, and shouting are strongly discouraged.
- Limit private gatherings to **10 people or fewer**.
- Open windows and/or doors to allow air to flow, when possible if gathering indoors.

Holiday Travel

If possible, you should delay any nonessential travel. Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. Your chances of infection also depend on whether you and those around you take steps to protect yourself and others, such as wearing masks and staying 6 feet away from people outside your household ([social distancing](#)).

- Consider traveling during non-peak hours to better social distance from others.
- Pack sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol with you if you are unable to find a hand-washing station.
- Wear a mask when traveling with anyone outside of your immediate household.
- Bring extra masks and a sealable plastic bag, in case your mask becomes wet or dirty. Place the used mask in the plastic bag until it can be washed.
- Use touchless payment when possible.
- Avoid touching surfaces, such as kiosks, touchscreens, ticket machines, elevator buttons, and benches as much as possible.
 - If you must touch these surfaces, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use a sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

In general, the longer you are around a person with COVID-19, the more likely you are to get infected.

As a part of supporting good health during the holiday season, also get your annual flu vaccine to protect you and your family against the flu.

References

- **CDC COVID-19: Holiday Celebrations**. Last Updated November 11, 2020.
- **Safe Holiday Celebrations during COVID-19**. Minnesota Department of Health
- **Holiday Season Safety Tips**. Illinois Department of Public Health. Released October 15, 2020.
- **Guidance for Private Gatherings**. California Department of Public Health
- **CDC: Protect Yourself When Using Transportation**. Last Updated October 21, 2020.