

7 TIPS FOR A COVID-FREE HOLIDAY

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IF you are planning to get together with others for thanksgiving or the other holidays, here are some things to keep in mind to try to reduce risk of getting or spreading COVID:

1 WEAR THAT MASK



Everyone should wear a good mask (ideally surgical and well-fitting) whenever not eating or drinking. I know it will be tempting to be like, ah whatever, it's probably fine cuz I'm outdoors...or ah whatever, if I'm gonna get COVID, I'm gonna get it...but dosage matters for how sick you get and masks have been shown to protect against more severe illness with COVID. IF YOU ARE GONNA TALK/LAUGH/SHOUT, do it with masks on. So save the funny stories for after you eat and can put masks back on.

2 GET THAT FRESH AIR

Studies are showing that having fresh air diluting any virus concentration in indoor air can help reduce the risk of transmission so...ideally the whole time, but especially when you are planning to be eating with masks off, go outside to eat! And if it is too cold, then just bundle up for the eating part and keep the windows/doors open while your masks are off. You might designate people from one household to be in charge of serving plates so that you don't have people congregating in the kitchen and sharing serving utensils. Save the buffet for next year. You might also consider a few smaller tables rather than one big one.

3 SCHEDULE IT EARLIER IN THE DAY

So that it's warmer and you can be outside for all or part of the time together.

4 SHORTEN THE GATHERING

Duration of exposure matters. Try to minimize time in a large gathering and try to minimize time with masks off.



5 QUARANTINE AS STRICTLY AS POSSIBLE BEFORE YOU GATHER

One negative test doesn't mean you are COVID free. 1 in 5 PCR tests for a positive case will result in false negative and you may not have given enough time between exposure and testing for it to be detected. It's best to self-isolate for at least 8 days prior to gathering to minimize risk that you might spread it unknowingly, but even isolating for 4-5 days prior gives you a good shot at knowing if you have been exposed before spreading to others (because you're likely to get symptoms first).

6 BE HONEST ABOUT WHETHER YOU ARE FEELING A LITTLE OFF/UNWELL

There should be a day-of check in to see if anyone is feeling at all unwell and needs to stay separate from others. And then follow-up and see how folks are feeling 4-5 days after gathering.

7 MAKE IT SMALLER

The risk that you will be exposed to COVID increases as you have more people present from different households. The other recommendations become more important, the larger the gathering.



If you've all strictly quarantined or are in a place where community transmission is very low, then I wouldn't worry too much. In general, the biggest risk of transmission will likely be when you are talking loudly/laughing with no mask on, indoors, seated close together.

Hope that helps you make decisions and take care of each other!