Tips for a safer holiday season

Rates of new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are steeply rising in Rhode Island and across the country. Wherever you celebrate this holiday season, follow these tips and consider participating in only lower risk activities to help lower the chances of catching and spreading COVID-19.

Lower risk celebrations

• Limit in-person holiday gatherings to only people you live with. Do not travel or host guests for the holidays. Staying home and celebrating with only those you live with is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
• Find safer, creative ways to celebrate the holidays with people you don’t live with.
  - Prepare or order a holiday meal for friends or family. Deliver food to them in a way that limits contact.
  - Host a virtual holiday dinner with extended family or friends, especially if they are at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 or live in a nursing home or assisted living facility.
  - Watch sporting events, parades, and movies from home or virtually with others rather than going out.

Higher risk celebrations

If you risk celebrating the holidays in person with people you don’t live with:

• Limit social contact outside of your household to one other household or one or two other people. Keep your group small and stable. Limit social gatherings to no more than 10 people as required by law, unless you are at a restaurant or a location with an on-site licensed caterer.
• Wear your mask and watch your distance at all times, even within your small, stable group.
• For 14 days before and after holiday gatherings, stay home, avoid contact with other people, and only leave home for essential activities.
• Take it outside as weather permits. Open windows and doors to increase air flow when guests come inside.
• Plan and get creative with limiting the use of shared spaces and objects. For example, seat people at least six feet apart from each other. When exchanging gifts, use hand sanitizer or exchange gifts virtually.
• Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and shared items between uses.
• Avoid these activities:
  - Sharing food and drinks.
  - Shaking hands and hugging. Wave and verbally greet others instead.
  - Singing, dancing, chanting, and shouting. These activities increase your chances of catching and spreading COVID-19 through the air.
  - Outdoor family football games and other high-contact activities.
  - In-person gatherings with people at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with certain medical conditions.

• Wear a mask and watch your distance any time you’re near people you don’t live with, even if you’re with extended family, team-mates, your faith community, or close friends—indoors and outdoors.
• Stick to essential activities and continue to take it outside. Essential activities include going to work or school, exercising, medical appointments, and buying goods and meals.
• Remember the three Ws!
  - Wear a mask that’s at least two our nose, mouth, and chin without any gaps.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Or carry and use hand sanitizer that’s at least 60% alcohol.
  - Watch your distance by staying at least six feet apart from others.
• Stay home and apart from others if you have symptoms, if you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or if you are in quarantine or isolation.

These tips may change as COVID-19 case counts change. Find more tips for safely celebrating holidays at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html

11/02/2020