



**Public Health**  
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# PLAINVILLE-SOUTHINGTON REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT

*Serving the communities of Middlefield, Plainville and Southington*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Source: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Holiday-Guidance>

## How can I prepare for holiday gatherings?

### Questions you might have about Holiday Gatherings

#### General Questions and Considerations

*Why is it important to be cautious over the holidays? I'll only be around my family members who I trust.*  
Connecticut has been a national leader in our COVID-19 response efforts. However, as the country heads into winter, flu season, and into holiday gatherings – the risk of spreading COVID-19 has become higher, and even Connecticut is seeing a spike in cases.

Several factors contribute to the holidays being a high-risk time to spread the virus, including:

- Traveling to communities with high concentration of COVID-19 cases;
- Gathering (indoors or outdoors) with friends and family outside of your local area;
- Participating in larger, longer gatherings;
- Traveling for long periods of time in enclosed spaces like buses or airplanes; and,
- Risky behavior like not wearing masks, or not social distancing around family members and close friends.

No matter how you celebrate – it's critical to **make a plan** to ensure that you keep yourself, and your family as safe as possible.

*What's the best way to stay safe over the holiday season?*

The best way to ensure your family gatherings are safe is to have your holiday gatherings virtually. But, if you have to travel, and visit family and friends for the holiday – follow some basic public health safety precautions.

## Events

*Is there a limit on how many people I should have at a holiday gathering?*

Phase 2.1 (effective 11/6) limits private gatherings both indoors and outdoors to 10 people. This is to ensure that you, and your loved ones are as safe as possible this holiday season. Remember, even with a small gathering size, you should still make sure you wear a mask, keep a distance, wash your hands, and avoid leaving your home all together if you feel sick.

*I have to host a holiday event – how can I do it safely?*

If you are hosting a holiday event that includes people outside your household, consider:

- **Conduct pre-party screening:** Screen guests and ask them if they feel sick or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Ask your guests to stay home if they feel sick.
- **Limit attendance:** Fewer attendees will lower the risk of spreading virus.
- **Invite only local attendees:** Guests from other regions, especially areas with high COVID-19 cases, can pose increased risks.
- **Use outdoor spaces:** Hold activities, especially meals, outdoors if you can. If this is not possible, use an indoor space that is well ventilated and allows for physical distancing. If a gathering is being held indoors, opening windows and doors or use of portable air cleaners can reduce the risk of spreading the virus.
- **Have personal protective equipment (PPE) available:** Provide masks, hand sanitizer, and tissues for guests who have not brought their own.
- **Use disposable items:** Single use plates, utensils, and to-go containers may limit the spread of COVID-19.
- **Ask for self-imposed pre-holiday social distancing:** Consider asking guests to adhere to safety principles by avoiding contact with people outside of their households for 14 days before the gathering to lower risks of virus spread.
- **Share safety guidelines:** Provide up-to-date [COVID-19 safety information](#) to guests and share all measures you have taken to limit risks.

*How should I set up my home for an event?*

If you have decided to have a holiday gathering, consider using outdoor space. If that's not possible – make sure that you set up in a way that ensures your friends and family are spread out. Maybe instead of everyone eating at one large dining room table – you should consider smaller tables in multiple rooms.

*I have to attend a holiday event – how can I do it safely?*

If you are attending holiday events that include people outside of your household, you may consider the following:

- **Events that use outdoor venues:** Attending gatherings held outdoors will pose a lower risk than indoor gatherings.
- **Local events:** Avoiding travel outside your community can lower infection risk.
- **Bring PPE:** Bring your own mask, hand sanitizer, and tissues to help you and others stay healthy.
- **Avoid shared items:** Consider bringing single use utensils and cups (or your own items).
- **Prepare with social distancing:** Consider avoiding contact with people outside your household for 14 days before the gathering to lower the risk of virus spread.
- **Safety protocols:** Ask the host about up-to-date COVID-19 safety information and protocols that have been taken to lower risks for the gathering in their area. You should also seek out this information yourself to ensure you're prepared to travel.

*What should I do if family members come to my house without masks?*

If you're hosting or attending an event – you should consider having additional masks, and hand sanitizer available for those who may have forgotten.

*I am concerned about everyone using the same plates and utensils, what can I do?*

If you're hosting, or attending an event – consider providing individual, disposable plates, bowls, utensils, and to-go containers.

## **Travel**

*I am traveling for the holidays – what's the best way to get to my destination?*

If you have to travel, the best way to make sure you stay safe is to avoid contact with others as much as possible, and continue to follow basic guidelines:

- Stay home if you feel sick;
- Wear a mask;
- Maintain social distancing; and,
- Wash your hands.

*What can I do to prepare to travel safely?*

- Monitor your health for [COVID-19 symptoms](#), and don't travel if you or anyone you're traveling with feel sick.
- Check [Connecticut Travel Advisory restrictions](#), and the [CDC travel recommendations](#) before your trip.
- If you are traveling from a non-alert area, consider obtaining a COVID-19 PCR test 72 hours prior to arrival. Consider limiting contact to people in your household once back in CT for 14 days after returning home.
- Safety principles are crucial regardless of where you are traveling from. Follow the requirements of testing, stay-at-home orders, and quarantine before and after arrival.
- Bring masks to wear in public places and on public transportation. Wear a mask in front of *anyone* who doesn't live in your household.
- Make sure to pack food, water, additional medication (if you take medication), tissues, hand sanitizer, or anything you require to stay healthy.

*I have to travel by plane – how can I stay safe?*

Travel by air requires long periods of time to be spent indoors in terminals and on the flight. Options for physical distancing on the plane may be limited. A high frequency of air changes per hour on planes coupled with mandatory mask use help lower risks. Wear a mask and maintain physical distancing (6 ft minimum) in common areas. Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer. Avoid touching commonly used surfaces.

If you plan to eat on your trip, safer option is to bring your own food. If this is not possible, use pick-up options. Avoid restaurants that are not careful about sanitation and physical distancing, and enforce mask use for employees and patrons who are not yet eating.

*I'm thinking about traveling in an RV – is that safe?*

RV travel requires the fewest stops on-route. Food and gas stops will increase risk, especially in areas with higher COVID-19 cases; consider limiting the length and number of these stops.

*Is it safe for me to stay in a hotel?*

If you have to stay in a hotel, check the COVID-19 safety protocols that have been implemented. Use options for online reservation and check-in, mobile room key, and contactless payment. Consider taking the stairs rather than using elevators, when possible.

*Where do I learn about travel requirements?*

If you're visiting or returning to the State of Connecticut – keep an eye on our travel advisory requirements at [ct.gov/coronavirus/travel](http://ct.gov/coronavirus/travel).

*Can I travel safely inside the State of Connecticut?*

If you're visiting anyone outside of your household, you should consider a 14-day quarantine before any holiday event. As we get closer to winter, we're seeing a rise in COVID-19 cases – and you can always check the status of a town you're visiting on [Connecticut's COVID-19 Data Tracker](#).

Remember, if you feel sick, you should not travel – even within the State of Connecticut.

## **Travel and Quarantine**

*What quarantine requirements do I need to follow?*

If you're returning from a state affected by Connecticut's travel advisory, you are required to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival, or arrival with a negative test result received within 72 hours prior to returning to Connecticut. The quarantine requirement can also be lifted by a negative test upon return.

If you plan to travel for the holiday, you should consider quarantining 14 days prior to your holiday gathering, and for 14 days upon return home – even with a negative test.

*What quarantine requirements should my family follow?*

If you're visiting family for a holiday gathering, you should consider talking with them about quarantining for 14 days prior to your gathering.

## **Students**

*What should university, college, and high school boarding students **visiting Connecticut** for the holidays consider?*

Check the status of COVID-19 cases in the campus area, your destination in Connecticut, any areas through you will travel though, and travel restrictions or requirements for testing, stay-at-home orders, or quarantine.

- Consider getting the flu (influenza) vaccination before traveling.
- Limit contact to people in your household, residence hall, or “pod” for 14 days before travelling.
- If you are traveling from a state that requires it under Connecticut's travel advisory, you must quarantine for 14 days upon arrival in Connecticut. You may test out this mandatory quarantine by obtaining a negative COVID-19 PCR test 72 hours prior to arrival or by having a negative test after arrival. *You must quarantine until the negative test result is received.*
- If you are traveling from an area not affected by Connecticut's travel advisory, consider taking a COVID-19 PCR test and only travel if the result is negative. Consider limiting contact to people in your household for 14 days once back in CT.
- Avoid contact with vulnerable family members for 14 days after arriving home prior to your holiday gathering.

*What should university, college, and high school boarding students **returning to Connecticut** for the holidays consider?*

If you travel to a state covered under Connecticut's travel advisory, you are required to quarantine for 14 days or have a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 prior to arriving in Connecticut. You must quarantine until the negative test result is received.

- If you are traveling from a state not covered under Connecticut's travel advisory, consider taking a COVID-19 PCR test and only travel if the result is negative. Consider limiting contact to people in your household, residence hall, or "pod" for 14 days after you are back in Connecticut.
- Do not participate in in-person classes if you are feeling sick; take part in classes online.