

# Can your Thanksgiving be enjoyable – and safe? Yes!

Protecting our loved ones is a priority this holiday season, and that includes making informed decisions about family and social gatherings. With COVID-19 activity rising across New Jersey, there are several things to consider to assess the risk and decide whether a more distant or virtual gathering is the best and safest approach.

- 1 What is the level of COVID-19 cases and spread in your area? (If your area is experiencing a growing number of cases, large holiday gatherings create a prime opportunity for COVID-19 to spread.)
- 2 How many people would attend the gathering? (Smaller get-togethers are safer by limiting exposure, and making it easier to socially distance.)
- 3 Does your guest list include senior citizens or anyone with an underlying health condition? (Both of these groups are more vulnerable to COVID-19. Surrounding them with other people at your gathering puts them at greater risk.)
- 4 Are the attendees all from the local area or would they come from other areas? (Higher levels of COVID-19 cases and community spread in your location, or where attendees are coming from, increases the risk of infection and spread.)
- 5 How will attendees travel to the gathering – by car, plane or bus? (Public transportation, or stopping at rest areas, increases exposures and brings that risk to your holiday gathering.)
- 6 Have the attendees been tested for COVID-19, and will they quarantine from the date of the test until the holiday gathering? (This is a smart practice in identifying a core of close family and friends that want to socialize while protecting everyone.)
- 7 Is your gathering indoors or outside? How long will it last? (Indoor gatherings bring a greater risk of transmission, and longer exposure to others also increases the risk.) Indoor gatherings should not exceed more than 10 people.
- 8 Will all attendees be willing to follow “the rules”? (Personal actions like wearing a mask, hand washing, social distancing and staying home when sick are critical for a responsible holiday gathering.)

*If your answers to these questions raise concerns about the ability to keep your friends and family safe, consider other ways to celebrate the holidays this year.*

## Create a Holiday Bubble

A “bubble” during COVID-19 is a group of people who commit to safety practices that protect against the spread of the virus, and agree to interact only with bubble members who follow the same precautions. Creating your bubble requires preparation and commitment, that — if followed with discipline — could create a way to gather over the holidays with greater peace of mind.

- Identify the members of your bubble and make sure everyone is committed to following the safety precautions, including limiting exposure to anyone beyond the bubble.
- Two weeks prior to your gathering, begin your self-quarantine. Avoid exposure to anyone who’s not part of your bubble.
- Get a COVID test, and continue to self-quarantine.
- Even with a negative test result, continue to monitor for COVID symptoms. If you become sick, see a healthcare provider and get tested.
- Anyone with a positive COVID-19 test or signs of illness should bow out of the holiday bubble.
- Agree on the location and the ground rules for your holiday gathering, including face masking and social distancing. Consider who will cook, or whether attendees will bring their own separate food.
- Drive to your gathering if possible, and follow strict precautions if you must stop at a rest area or service station.
- At the holidays, continue to use common sense precautions with members of your bubble and respect the rules for your safe social gathering.

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