



COVID-19

# Thanksgiving dos and don'ts

## Top 3 things to remember:

1. Only interact in-person with people from your household (defined as those who normally live and sleep under the same roof).
2. Refrain from traveling. Celebrate virtually with the people who don't live with you.
3. Wear a mask and keep your distance while grocery shopping for your Thanksgiving feast. Plan ahead and limit to one trip.

For many of us, Thanksgiving is an important time for connecting with family and friends. Many people are used to visiting others outside their households during this time of year. As we approach the holidays, it's important to think about the best ways to keep our loved ones and our communities safe as we celebrate. The COVID-19 pandemic changes a lot about our lives, and the holidays are no exception. The best way to celebrate the people we care about most right now is to keep them safe by not interacting with them in person. About 40 percent of people infected with COVID-19 do not have symptoms and may not know they're infected, but can still spread the virus to their loved ones, putting them at risk of serious illness or death.

This year is an opportunity to reimagine what togetherness can look like. Colorado is currently seeing an alarming number of new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. In order to keep our loved ones safe, we will need to celebrate Thanksgiving differently this season. Staying home and celebrating with your immediate household, or celebrating with friends and family virtually, is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones this year.

Just because we keep physical distance doesn't mean we have to be distant in other ways. There are many creative things you can do to make those closest to you feel loved this Thanksgiving while making sure they stay healthy for many more seasons to come.

It's up to you to stay safe, not only for yourself, but for your family, friends, and community. Here are some more ideas about how to enjoy a joyous, festive, and safer Thanksgiving.

## Thanksgiving celebration ideas

Thanksgiving is one of the most delicious days of the year, and a wonderful opportunity to show your love for your friends and family by cooking and sharing food with them. There are many ways to enjoy Thanksgiving that don't involve putting your loved ones at risk. Consider celebrating in a way that keeps everyone safe:

- Cooking and eating a special meal with members of your immediate household.
- Video chatting or talking on the phone with friends and family who don't live with you.
- Sharing your favorite recipes and photos of the food you've cooked via text message or email.
- Watching the Thanksgiving Day Parade, the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, a football game, and other televised events at home.
- Simultaneously watching your favorite Thanksgiving movie with family and friends in other households over video chat.
- Cooking and baking treats for your neighbors, friends, and family, then delivering them in a way that doesn't involve face-to-face contact. You can video chat with them later as they take their first bite.

We don't recommend celebrating Thanksgiving in-person with people who don't live with you this year. If you must attend an in-person celebration with other households, know that you are putting yourself, your family, and your community at risk. The best precaution is to only celebrate at home, but if you must gather in person, consider ways to lower your risk of spreading COVID-19 as much as possible:

- Interacting with just one other household in your local community with 10 or fewer total guests.
- Eating dinner outside where airflow makes transmission less likely.
- Wearing a mask whenever you are near anyone who doesn't live with you, except to eat and drink.
- Keeping 6 feet or more of distance from anyone who doesn't live with you.
- Washing your hands with soap and water frequently.
- Designating a food server who wears a mask while filling guests' plates. Avoid buffet-style serving.
- Only eating from your own plate, or sharing food only with members of your own household.
- Having each household bring and eat their own food from home.
- Quarantining for 14 days before interacting with another household and 14 days after returning home.

### **Black Friday and holiday shopping**

When shopping for holiday gifts this year, consider taking advantage of online sales, home delivery, and curbside pick-up rather than visiting crowded stores. [Shop at local Colorado businesses](#) to support the state's economy this holiday season.

## Travel is not recommended

COVID-19 is currently spreading at an alarming rate throughout the United States. **The safest thing to do right now is to stay home.** Airport terminals, bus stations, train stations, rest stops, and hotel lobbies are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus. These are also places where it can be hard to keep your distance from others. If you must travel, take as many precautions as possible to reduce your risk of catching or spreading the virus.

Keep in mind that you may need to isolate or quarantine away from home if you become sick or are exposed to COVID-19 while traveling. You will not be able to travel across state lines while in isolation or quarantine.

If you must travel for Thanksgiving, we recommend:

- Quarantining for 14 days before visiting and 14 days after returning home.
- Wearing a mask.
- Washing your hands frequently, or using hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Staying 6 feet or more away from anyone who doesn't live with you.
- Opening windows to improve ventilation on buses, trains, or shared cars.
- Postponing or cancelling your travel if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 in the 14 days before your travel. You should get tested as soon as you develop symptoms, or seven days after you think you have been exposed. For more information about testing and how to find a testing site near you, see [Testing for COVID-19](#).
- Canceling your plans if you or your traveling companions test positive or develop symptoms.

## Myths

- Myth: "Getting a negative COVID-19 test means I can go ahead with my normal Thanksgiving plans."
- Reality: A negative test does not necessarily mean that you are free of COVID-19. Your sample may have been collected too early in your infection for COVID-19 to be detectable. Additionally, tests, especially rapid tests, are not perfect -- they may miss the virus in some infected people. It's also possible that you could contract COVID-19 in between getting tested and arriving at Thanksgiving, and then spread the virus to friends or family members, who could then get very sick or die.
- Myth: "Flying is safe because COVID-19 can't spread on planes."
- Reality: Flying involves many risky scenarios where you will be in close contact with strangers, like waiting in security lines and airport terminals. Even if you take all the right precautions on a plane trip, you can't control the behavior of everyone around you. Many people are currently infectious with COVID-19, which makes flying a dangerous form of travel.

- Myth: “I had COVID-19 earlier in the year, so I can go ahead with my normal Thanksgiving plans.”
- Reality: [Reinfection with COVID-19](#) is rare, but it has been shown to happen. Even if you already had COVID-19, there is no way to guarantee you won’t get it again and spread it to your friends and family at a holiday gathering.
- Myth: “I’m young, so getting COVID-19 is no big deal.”
- Reality: Even young, healthy people can get very sick or die of COVID-19. Young, healthy people can also spread the virus to their higher-risk friends and relatives. It’s important to think not only of yourself, but of every person you’ll be in contact with this holiday season when assessing the risk of COVID-19.
- Myth: “I wear a mask all the time, so there’s no way I could spread COVID-19.”
- Reality: Masks are a helpful tool for reducing the risk of contracting the virus, but they don’t completely eliminate that risk. There is no way to ensure zero risk of infection when you enter public places or come into contact with other people. The safest thing to do right now is to stay home. Even if you take all the right precautions, you can’t control the behavior of everyone around you.
- Myth: “It’s better for me to get COVID-19 now, so that we can get herd immunity.”
- Reality: We may be able to safely achieve herd immunity once a COVID-19 vaccine has been licensed and approved for public use. For now, the risks of getting the virus are simply too high. The best thing to do is to avoid getting COVID-19 by staying home whenever possible.

### Additional resources

CDC: [Holiday Celebrations](#)

CDC: [Celebrating Thanksgiving](#)

CDC: [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#)