SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY | COVID–19 Response

Guidance for Celebrating Holidays

Traditional holiday gatherings are fun and can be an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends, but they can increase the chances of spreading COVID-19. Unfortunately, the number of COVID-19 cases is increasing, and gatherings of families and friends are a leading contributor to the rise in COVID-19 cases. The County urges extreme caution during this upcoming holiday season and encourages residents to consider safer alternatives to some traditional holiday activities.

CURRENT STATE HEALTH ORDER

The State has guidance in effect that applies to those planning to host or participate in in-person gatherings:

- The State prohibits gatherings that include members of more than three households. The smaller the number of people, the lower the risk of virus transmission.
    - People who do not currently live in your housing unit, such as college students who are returning home from school for the holidays, are considered by the State to be members of separate households.
- People are advised to keep members of small gatherings stable and avoid participating in multiple gatherings with different households.
- The State requires that all gatherings be held outside. Gatherings that occur outdoors are significantly safer than indoor gatherings. The State advises that attendees may go inside to use restrooms as long as the restrooms are frequently sanitized.
    - If gathering outdoors is not feasible and must be held indoors, hosts are advised to increase air circulation by opening windows or doors as much as possible, especially in rooms where people are gathering.
- It is best if gatherings are two hours or less. The longer the gathering takes place, the higher the risk of transmission.
- Singing, shouting, and physical exertion are strongly discouraged, especially indoors. These activities significantly increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission because they increase the release of respiratory droplets and fine aerosols into the air. If they occur, the following rules and recommendations apply:
    - Wear a face covering at all times while singing, including anyone who is leading a song.
    - Maintain physical distancing beyond 6 feet to further reduce risk.
    - People who are singing are strongly encouraged to do so quietly (at or below the volume of a normal speaking voice).
- State health orders do not allow Carnivals, festivals, and live entertainment.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SMALL GATHERINGS

Whether individuals are hosting or attending a small gathering, these considerations should be kept in mind:

- Limit the number of attendees as much as possible to allow people from different households to remain at least 6 feet apart at all times. Guests from different households should try to avoid direct contact, including handshakes and hugs.
- Host gatherings outdoors rather than indoors as much as possible. Even in the outdoors, require guests to wear masks when not eating or drinking and ensure guests from different households stay 6 feet apart.
    - If this is not feasible, make sure the room or space is well-ventilated (for example, open a window).
- Singing or shouting are strongly discouraged, especially indoors. Keep music levels low so guests don't have to shout or speak loudly to be heard.
- Attendees should be encouraged to wash their hands often with soap and water. Provide and/or ask guests to bring supplies to help keep everyone safe, such as extra face coverings and hand sanitizer. Ensure bathrooms have enough hand soap and single-use paper towels.
- People at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (such as older adults and people with chronic medical conditions) are strongly urged not to attend any gatherings, especially indoor gatherings. If higher-risk individuals do attend gatherings, they should consider the following to decrease the risk of exposure:
    - Spend as much time as possible outside, or near outside air flow such as open windows or doors.
    - Wear a respirator or surgical mask instead of a cloth mask, and minimize any time at the event with the mask off.
    - Remain at least 6 feet, or ideally even farther away, from those from other households as much as possible, especially when people are eating or drinking without face coverings.
    - Spend a shorter time at the gathering than others to reduce potential exposure.
- Individuals that show COVID-19 symptoms within 48 hours after attending a gathering should notify the host immediately and get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible. Visit https://sbcovid19.com/testing-sites to see COVID-19 testing sites available throughout the county.
    - The host should notify all attendees that there may have been possible exposure and encourage attendees to monitor for symptoms and get tested for COVID-19.

Food and Drinks

Although there is currently no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is directly associated with spreading COVID-19, it is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils

that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. The County advises the following:

- Encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves and for their own household only. Avoid potluck-style gatherings.
- Wear a mask while preparing food for or serving food to others who don't live in the same household.
- Limit crowding in areas where food is served by having one person who is wearing a face covering dispense food individually to plates, always keeping a minimum of a 6-foot distance from the person they are serving. Having one identified person serving food can also prevent multiple people handling the same serving utensils.
- Hosts can provide single-serving drinks, or have drinks dispensed in advanced by a single person to avoid multiple people handling the same dispensers.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, plates and utensils, and condiments.
- Offer no-touch trash cans for guests to easily throw away food items.

CONSIDER ALTERNATE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Celebrating virtually or with members of the same household poses the lowest risk for spread. Here are some additional activities that you and your family can do to stay safe:

- Have virtual cooking and dinner parties via apps or stream them online with friends and family outside your household
- Safely prepare traditional dishes and deliver them to family and friends in a way that does not involve contact with others, like leaving them on the porch and making sure to stay 6 feet away from them
- Watch television (holiday parades, movies and shows, sports) and play games with people in the same household
- Shopping
    - Shop online and have purchases conveniently delivered
    - Use contactless services for purchased items, like curbside pick-up
    - Shop in open-air markets, staying 6 feet away from others

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAVEL

The State requires everyone planning non-essential travel to comply with the current State travel advisory and follow the personal protection measures in the section below to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Persons arriving from other states or countries, including returning residents, should practice self-quarantine for 14 days after arrival. These persons should limit their

interactions to their immediate household. This recommendation does not apply to individuals who cross state or international borders for essential travel.
- Residents are encouraged to stay home or in their region and avoid non-essential travel to other states or countries. Travel increases the chance of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others.

PERSONAL PROTECTION MEASURES

Regardless of how you choose to celebrate the holidays, it is important to keep the following in mind:

- Correctly wear a cloth face covering (over the nose and mouth) to prevent disease spread when outside your home and around others that are not part of your household.
- Avoid confined spaces. Actively stay away from indoor spaces that don't allow for easy distancing of at least 6 feet between you and others who are not part of your household.
- Avoid close contact. Stay at least 6 feet away from other people who are not part of your household, especially while talking, eating, drinking, and singing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.
- Clean frequently touched items regularly. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you are sick, or you have been in contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19, stay home, and away from others.

For more information on how to stay safe during the holidays, please visit the centers for disease control and prevention's holiday celebrations and small gatherings webpage.