

Safer Ways to celebrate the Holidays



Public Health
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Dayton & Montgomery County

Holiday traditions are important for families and children. There are several ways to enjoy holiday traditions and protect you and your family's health.

General COVID-19 Precautions

1. **Protect others** and yourself by getting a COVID-19 vaccination.
2. **Wear well-fitted masks** over your nose and mouth if you are in public indoor settings if you are not fully vaccinated. (Even those who are fully vaccinated should wear a mask in public indoor settings in communities with substantial to high transmission)
3. **Outdoors** is safer than indoors
4. **Avoid crowded**, poorly ventilated spaces
5. **If you are sick** or have symptoms, don't host or attend a gathering
6. **Get tested** if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have a close contact with someone who has COVID-19



Travel Recommendations

If you are considering traveling for a holiday or event, visit CDC's travel page to help you decide what is best for you and your family. CDC still recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated.

1. **If you are not fully vaccinated** and must travel, follow CDC's domestic travel or international travel recommendations for unvaccinated people.
2. **If you are traveling in a group** or family with unvaccinated people, choose safer travel options.
3. Everyone, even people who are fully vaccinated, is required to **wear a mask on public transportation** and **follow international travel recommendations**.



Special COVID-19 Precautions for Families with Compromised Individuals

1. People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated and have received an additional dose. They should continue to **take all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people**, including wearing a well-fitted mask, until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
2. You might **choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission** if a member of your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated.
3. If you are gathering with a group of people from multiple households and potentially from different parts of the country, you could **consider additional precautions (e.g., avoiding crowded indoor spaces before travel, taking a test) in advance of gathering to further reduce risk**.
4. **Do NOT** put a mask on children younger than 2 years old.



Food Safety Tips



Feasting with family is part of many holiday celebrations.

Follow these simple tips to help prevent food poisoning during the holidays:

1. **Cook food thoroughly:** Meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs can carry germs that cause food poisoning. Use a food thermometer to ensure these foods have been cooked to a safe internal temperature. Roasts, chops, steaks, and fresh ham should rest for 3 minutes after you remove them from the oven or grill.
2. **Keep food out of the “danger zone.”** Bacteria can grow rapidly in the danger zone between 40°F and 140°F. After food is cooked, keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Refrigerate or freeze any perishable food within 2 hours. The temperature in your refrigerator should be set at or below 40°F and the freezer at or below 0°F.
3. **Use pasteurized eggs for dishes containing raw eggs.** Salmonella and other harmful germs can live on both the outside and inside of normal-looking eggs. Many holiday favorites contain raw eggs, including eggnog, tiramisu, hollandaise sauce, and Caesar dressing. Always use pasteurized eggs when making these and other foods made with raw eggs.
4. **Do not eat raw dough or batter.** Dough and batter made with flour or eggs can contain harmful germs, such as E. coli and Salmonella. Do not taste or eat raw dough or batter that is meant to be baked or cooked. This includes dough or batter for cookies, cakes, pies, biscuits, pancakes, tortillas, pizza, or crafts. Do not let children taste raw dough or batter or play with dough at home or in restaurants. Some companies and stores offer edible cookie dough that uses heat-treated flour and pasteurized eggs or no eggs. Read the label carefully to make sure the dough is meant to be eaten without baking or cooking.
5. **Keep foods separated.** Keep meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods at the grocery store and in the refrigerator. Prevent juices from meat, chicken, turkey, and seafood from dripping or leaking onto other foods by keeping them in containers or sealed plastic bags. Store eggs in their original carton in the main compartment of the refrigerator.
6. **Thaw your turkey safely.** Thaw turkey in the refrigerator, in a sink of cold water (change the water every 30 minutes), or in the microwave. Avoid thawing foods on the counter. A turkey must thaw at a safe temperature to prevent harmful germs from growing rapidly.
7. **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands with soap and water during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:
 - a. **Before, during, and after preparing food**
 - b. **Before eating food**
 - c. **After handling pet food or pet treats or touching pets**
 - d. **After using the toilet**
 - e. **After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet**
 - f. **After touching garbage**
 - g. **Before and after caring for someone who is sick**
 - h. **Before and after treating a cut or wound**
 - i. **After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing**



By working together, we can enjoy safer holidays, travel, and protect our own health as well as the health of our family and friends.