



## DELAWARE DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH HOLIDAY GUIDANCE

Delaware is seeing a surge in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Cases are spreading most often during social gatherings when people eat, drink and chat with others who don't live with them – without face coverings or keeping a safe and social distance. Which means this holiday season needs to be very different from those of years' past in order for us to get this under control. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, family celebrations will have to look different this year. **With everyone working together to make sure gatherings are safe, we will continue our fight to stop the spread of COVID-19.** And in doing so, you and your loved ones can enjoy many of your cherished traditions, introduce fun new activities to your celebration, and create lasting memories.

### Recommendation #1 – **Limit gatherings -- from meals to parties -- to just those who live in your house.**

**The most effective way to protect those you love is to stay home — and encourage everyone to do the same. Respect friends and relatives who turn down invites – they're doing the right thing! Why?**

- You can spread COVID-19 even if you don't have any symptoms.
- You're just as likely to get COVID-19 from friends and family as you are from strangers..... potentially even more so if you are more comfortable and let your guard down.
- Size matters. The more people at your gathering, the greater the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- Duration matters. The longer people are together at an event, the higher the risk.
- Gatherings with people coming from different locations pose greater risk. Traveling from different locations increases the likelihood that the virus will spread.

### Recommendation #2 – **You should wear a face covering when you are in public or can't avoid being around other people you don't live with.**

- **Don't let your guard down** just because you're with family. Keep your distance!
- Exchange air hugs and kisses **instead** of the real thing.
- **Take it outdoors.** Being outside allows more space, more fresh air and lower risk than being indoors – but you still should mask up and keep your distance.

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



DELAWARE HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health

**Recommendation #3 – College students and other young adults returning home should limit contact with others two weeks prior to your trip.**

***You can lower your risk ahead of time by:***

- Limiting close contacts with others as much as possible;
- Wearing a face covering whenever you leave your bedroom (even when around roommates); and
- Maintaining physical distance from others at all times.

***While at your destination:***

- Wear a face covering at all times, even when around family members.
- Don't get too close! Maintain a social distance – especially when not wearing a mask while you are eating, drinking or hanging out.

***When you prepare to leave to go home, you should:***

- Verify that you have no symptom of illness;
- Check the most recent state and local guidelines that for your travel and home destination; and
- Make a plan to get tested before and upon your return home (check your college or university's specific requirements)

**Recommendation #4 - Organize COVID-safe activities.**

- **Zoom - it's not just for meetings anymore!** Holiday potluck or sing-a-long anyone?
- **Conduct a virtual food drive** to donate to the Food Bank of Delaware or other charitable causes. The pandemic has hit them hard too, just when more people are in need of their support.
- **Keep the traditions you can.** Baking, recipe swaps, mailing cards, decorating, gift-giving — you can still safely do all these cherished activities and more.
- **Establish new traditions** - everything we know has been turned upside down this year, so find a new activity to enjoy.
- **Schedule a time to share a meal together virtually.** Have people share recipes and show their turkey, pies or other dishes they prepared.
- **Spend time together** - play games, watch parades, sports, and movies at home.
- Send photos, make calls and write letters to **keep in touch with everyone.**

For the latest Delaware updates:  
[de.gov/coronavirus](https://de.gov/coronavirus)

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## Recommendation #5 – **Shop Safely. Whether for food or gifts, keep the following suggestions in mind.**

- Shop online sales.
- Shop during hours fewer people will be in the store.
- Use contactless services for purchased items, like curbside pick-up.
- Shop in open air markets staying 6 feet away from others and wearing your face coverings.

## Important Reminders

- **Stay home if you are sick.**
- **Download COVID Alert DE on Google Play or the App Store.**  
*Delaware's free and anonymous exposure notification app is compatible with exposure notification apps in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Washington, D.C. COVID Alert DE uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology to alert app users if they have been in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and is also using the app.*
- **You should not attend a gathering if you:**
  - Are waiting for test results;
  - May have been exposed in the last 14 days;
  - Have any symptoms of COVID-19 (even if you think it's a cold); or
  - Are at a higher risk of severe illness from the virus.
- **If you get COVID-19 after attending a gathering, let the host know** so that other guests can be alerted that they may have been exposed.

**Remember that we are all in this together – we'll get through this and back to the holidays we are used to before you know it.**