

FROM: Chenango County Health Department

DATE: November 12, 2020

Make a Plan to be Safe From COVID-19 during the Holidays

Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are a time when many families and friends travel long distances to celebrate together. With a fall surge of coronavirus infections gripping the U.S., many Americans are forgoing tradition and getting creative with celebrations. Traveling increases the chance of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Having visitors from other locations can also increase risk of spreading the virus here in our community. We must do the best we can to protect ourselves and others.

We know that staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others. It is important to do what is best to protect those most at risk such as older adults, grandparents, and others. The situation becomes more complex when asymptomatic individuals pass the virus to others unknowingly. If you must travel or if you are expecting visitors from out of town, please consider the following tips and recommendations:

- ✓ Limit the number of people at your gathering. The current NYS gathering limit is 10 individuals.
- ✓ Quarantine or limit exposure to others BEFORE going to visit family members. The “magic day” to start a pre-Thanksgiving quarantine is November 13th.
- ✓ Consider the rules, recommendations, and COVID related data where individuals reside.
- ✓ Take extra precautions like wearing masks, getting your flu shot, handwashing, sanitizing high touch surfaces, and keeping your distance if you celebrate with others.
- ✓ The safest way to celebrate holidays this year is with people in your household and to avoid large family parties or gatherings.

The following people SHOULD NOT attend in-person holiday gatherings:

- Do not host or participate in any in-person gatherings if you or anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not met the criteria to go off quarantine
- People who have symptoms of COVID-19
- If you are waiting for COVID-19 viral test results
- People who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Do not host or attend gatherings with anyone who has COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- People at increased risk for severe illness.

If you are an older adult or person with certain medical conditions who is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or live or work with someone at increased risk of severe illness, you should avoid in-person gatherings with people who do not live in your household.

PLAN AHEAD. Be smart and stay safe. In recent weeks, we have seen an increased number of positive cases spread by small gatherings. This new guidance points out that even with friends and family, precautions need to be taken to prevent the holiday from adding to the trend of increasing cases. Please visit the following website for more details and to read all of the recommendations.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#not-attend>

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>