



# NORTHEAST HEALTH DISTRICT

220 Research Drive • Athens, Georgia 30605 • 706-583-2870  
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## MEDIA RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Guidance for Holiday Celebrations and Travel**

**Athens, GA** – The COVID-19 pandemic is causing families to make difficult decisions about their 2020 holiday celebrations. The Northeast Health District urges all individuals to plan ahead and take steps to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 and the flu as they celebrate. Traditional holiday celebrations with those in your immediate household can be enjoyed safely, but it is highly encouraged that anyone who does not live with you attend virtually rather than in-person. COVID-19 spreads easily whether gatherings are large or small, putting families and friends at risk – especially individuals who are elderly or have underlying medical conditions. Travel increases the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others.

If you do plan to spend the upcoming holidays with people you don't live with, take steps to reduce the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19 and the flu, including:

#### **Wear a mask**

- Wear a mask with two or more layers.
- Wear the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Make sure the mask fits snugly against the sides of your face.

#### **Stay at least 6 feet away from people who do not live with you**

- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread COVID-19 or the flu.
- Keeping 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from others is especially important for [people who are at higher risk of getting very sick](#).

#### **Wash your hands**

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Keep [hand sanitizer](#) made with at least 60% alcohol with you and use it when you are unable to wash your hands.

#### **If attending a gathering:**

- Bring your own food and drinks, as well as disposable plates, cups, and utensils.
- Wear a mask, and [safely store your mask](#) while eating and drinking.
- Avoid areas where food is being prepared, like the kitchen.

#### **If hosting a gathering:**

- Have conversations with guests ahead of time to set expectations for celebrating together.
- Host a small, [outdoor meal](#) with family and friends who live in your community.
- If celebrating indoors, make sure to open the windows.
- Limit the number of guests.
- Have guests bring their own food and drink.



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- If sharing food, limit the number of people in the areas where food is being prepared. Have one person serve the food, and provide disposable utensils and single-use condiments in packets.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces.
- Individuals who have not lived in the household during the two weeks prior to the holiday – such as members of the military or college students home for the holiday – should stay in a separate area of the house with a designated bathroom, if possible.
- Ask guests to avoid contact with people outside of their own households at least two weeks prior to attending.
- Consider providing masks in festive holiday prints for guests.

## **If planning to travel:**

- Check travel restrictions before you go, and follow state and local guidelines.
- Get your [flu shot](#) before you travel.
- Always wear your mask in public settings and on [public transportation](#).
- [Stay at least 6 feet apart](#) from anyone who does not live with you.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer made with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your mask, eyes, nose, and mouth.
- [Check your destination state's cases in the last 7 days](#)
  - High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the gathering location, as well as in the areas where attendees are coming from, increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees.

If you have recently been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should not host or participate in any in-person activities until after the time period for your isolation or quarantine ends. Instead, call friends and family to connect or use a video conferencing app to attend virtually. If you are not sure about how long you should be staying away from others after a COVID-19 infection or exposure, you should call your healthcare provider. You may also call the Northeast Health Department's testing hotline at 706-340-0996.

For more information about preventing the spread of COVID-19 during holiday gatherings, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>.

For accurate and reliable information on COVID-19, visit [dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus](http://dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus) or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

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