

Washington State Coronavirus Response

WINTER HOLIDAYS DURING COVID



If you Gather: A Safety Checklist

The safest choice this season is to not gather in person with people you don't live with. By making that choice, you will help control the spread of COVID-19. If you decide to gather with people from outside your household, there's always a risk of spreading COVID-19 infection. The tips below may help lessen that risk, but there will still be risk.

And remember, indoor social gatherings are not allowed unless all guests meet restriction requirements

- [Before you gather](#)
- [While you gather](#)
- [After you gather](#)

See also the [conversation guide](#). When deciding to get together, here are important things to discuss with friends and family.

Before you gather

- Plan ahead.** The safest option is to gather virtually with anyone you don't live with. If you decide to gather in person, get really clear with friends and family about how you will make safety a priority when spending time together. Set some ground rules that will help everyone know what to expect. [View a sample conversation guide.](#)
- Review your guest list.** First, keep it small - less than five people you don't live with. Make sure you have room for everyone to stay six feet apart. Next, think about who you are inviting. Are there people who may be in a [high risk category](#) or children? Consider special needs and precautions as part of your planning. Remember, it's an act of caring to decide not to invite people who have a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. [Find other ways to connect virtually.](#)
- Get creative.** Think about safer ways to gather that don't involve sharing a meal. Bundle up and meet for a walk or other outdoor activity—remember to stay six feet (2m) apart.
- Spread out.** Set up seating so that everyone can stay six feet (2m) apart at all times. Avoid gathering at a dining table.
- Keep it short.** Gather for less than two hours. Shorter periods of time give COVID-19 less chance to spread, and will make it less likely that someone will need to use a restroom. Shorter gatherings also make it easier to keep hands and surfaces properly sanitized.
- Do a health check.** Ask if anyone has had [symptoms](#) such as cough, fever or shortness of breath, in the last 2 weeks. Ask guests to check their temperature before arriving. Anyone with a fever—or who has had other symptoms, or knows they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last two weeks—should stay home.
- Consider the children.** Kids have trouble playing six feet apart, so wearing masks and not sharing toys or food may be the safest plan of action. Remember: kids under 2 should never wear masks!
- Make a food plan.** The safest option is to plan your gathering between meals. If you do offer a meal, separate food ahead of time into individual servings and avoid communal bowls and utensils. [Find more tips about food prep in the FAQs.](#)
- Get tested.** Get a COVID-19 test to make sure you're negative. It may take a few days to receive your test results, and you should quarantine at home while waiting for them. If you test negative, you still need to wear a mask and keep your distance from others when you socialize.
- Pre-event quarantine required for indoor social gatherings.** If you are considering having guests gather inside your home, they must meet the quarantine requirements outlined in the gathering restrictions. This is a good idea for outdoor gatherings as well.
- WA Notify.** Setup the [Washington Exposure Notification contact-tracing app](#) for your phone and share with you planned attendants.

While you gather

- Wash hands.** If there is no access to a sink, provide hand sanitizer.
- Wear masks.** Wear a face covering at all times. Have extra masks on hand if people forget.
- Kids and masks.** Children under 2 should never wear a mask. When with people from outside their household, children 2 to 4 should wear face coverings with adult supervision, and children 5 and older are required to wear face coverings. (If you have a child with a pre-existing medical condition and have concerns about masks, consult your medical provider.)
- No sharing.** Avoid potlucks, buffets or other shared food. Ask guests to bring their own cup, plates and utensils. Or, better yet, plan your small gathering between meals. And remember, don't share toys or other items, and avoid shared surfaces.
- Clean, clean, clean.** Disinfect frequently used surfaces before, during and after the gathering.
- Avoid close contact.** Smiles and air hugs only when with people you don't live with. The six-foot distance rule applies to kids from outside your household too. Again, smiles and air hugs only! And no sharing toys or snacks. This is hard, but prepare kids—and grandparents—ahead of time.
- Open windows.** If your guests have met all requirements of the indoor gathering restrictions and you decide you must have an indoor gathering, keep windows open in rooms where people will gather to allow for proper ventilation. Ask guests to dress warmly!
- WA Notify.** Ensure that your Bluetooth is turned-on.

After you gather

- Wash hands (again).** Wash for 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Sanitize.** Clean all surfaces that may have been touched by guests such as tabletops, counters, doorknobs and bathroom fixtures, with soap and water first, and then a disinfecting agent.
- Watch for symptoms.** Alert others at the gathering if there's a positive test among anyone in attendance. Learn more about what to do if you've been exposed.
- WA Notify.** If you test positive for COVID-19, share your COVID-19 test results to others you may have potentially exposed: Open the WA Notify app and select "notify others" and following instructions to share (also, notify healthandsafety@seattlecolleges.edu).

CELEBRATIONS DURING COVID



Conversation Guide

When deciding whether to get together, here are important things to discuss with friends and family.

- Has anyone experienced COVID-19 symptoms in the last two weeks or been in contact with someone who recently tested positive?
- If we must meet inside someone's home, how can we make sure that everyone has followed the quarantine requirements outlined in the indoor social gathering restrictions?
- Is there another way for us to connect without meeting in person?
- How can we keep our gathering small?
- Is there a place to meet outside?
- Is everyone comfortable wearing a mask the entire time?
- Can we keep it short enough so that people won't need to use a restroom? If not, how will we handle that?
- Will kids come and can they wear masks (older than 2)?
- How will food be shared (or not)?
- Is there a way to stay six feet apart while serving and eating?
- What will we do if the weather is bad?
- Even if we are meeting outside, are people willing and able to get tested and/or quarantine for 14 days before the gathering?
- Are there any individuals who are considered high risk who will be in attendance?
- Should we avoid travel to other cities or states?