

# News Release

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Media Contact: [Steve Elliott](#)

Phone: 602-364-3065

## Arizona Department of Health Services Releases Menu of Health Tips for Safer Holiday Gatherings

*Smaller groups, moving dinner outside help reduce COVID-19 risk*

Your menu may be the same this year, but other aspects of Thanksgiving may need to be different to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19.

That's why the Arizona Department of Health Services has developed a [menu of precautions](#) to take during holiday gatherings. Doing one makes your family and your guests safer. Doing more is even better.

"It's an unfortunate reality that household gatherings are contributing to the current rise in COVID-19 cases, percent positivity, and stress on our healthcare system," said Dr. Cara Christ, director of ADHS the Arizona Department of Health Services. "The holidays can bring together more households and more generations, including older individuals who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 and young adults and children who are more likely to be asymptomatic carriers.

Following these simple guidelines can help keep everyone safe during the holidays."

Recommendations for [safer holiday gatherings](#):

**Fresh air:** Celebrating in the open air of your yard or a park reduces the chances of transmitting COVID-19, though taking additional precautions is always a good idea. If moving outside isn't an option, open windows and patio doors to increase ventilation, maintain physical distance, and wear masks when not actively eating or drinking.

**Make it smaller:** Reducing the number of individuals and households gathering reduces the risk that someone who is infected will attend. Virtual meeting programs are a great way to connect friends and family, including vulnerable older family members, without the risk of exposing each other to COVID-19.

**Don't let down your guard:** It's easy to feel safe around relatives and friends you know and trust. In the interest of everyone's health, wear masks and physically distance around those who aren't members of your household, including those returning from college, and only hug and touch members of your household. Stay home and join virtually if you feel ill or think you may have been exposed to COVID-19.

**Serve smart:** Avoid self-serve setups, buffets, and sharing serving utensils. If sharing food, have one person serve and use single-use options, like plastic utensils.

**Keep hands clean:** Wash your hands before and after preparing, serving, and eating food. Consider giving each of your guests a travel-size sanitizer so they can practice good hand hygiene throughout the gathering.

Here's a bonus tip for after Thanksgiving dinner: Consider doing your Black Friday shopping online to avoid the crowds.

ADHS has more tips and guidance for the holidays at [azhealth.gov/WinterHolidays](https://www.azhealth.gov/WinterHolidays).

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