



NEWS RELEASE

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Celebrate Thanksgiving Safely

Stay Home to Reduce the Risk of COVID-19 Transmission

Atlanta – The COVID-19 pandemic is causing families to make difficult decisions about their 2020 Thanksgiving celebrations. The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) urges all Georgians to plan ahead and take steps to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the flu as they celebrate.

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. The safest way to celebrate Thanksgiving this year is to stay home and celebrate with people in your own household. Travel increases the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others.

“The surge of COVID-19 infections in Georgia and across the country mean we must rethink our idea of a traditional Thanksgiving this year,” said Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., DPH commissioner. “Each family must assess the risk of exposure to COVID-19, especially among elderly or medically fragile individuals, as they weigh the decision to host or attend a holiday gathering. Everyone needs to follow the guidance of wearing a face mask, social distancing and washing your hands frequently. And get a flu shot.”

If you do plan to spend Thanksgiving with people you don’t live with, take steps to reduce the risk of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends individuals who have not lived in the household during the two weeks ahead of the holiday (members of the military or college students home for the holiday) stay in a separate area of the house with a designated bathroom, if possible. Other recommendations include:

Wear a mask

- Wear a mask with two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- 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 others who do not live with you

- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread COVID-19 or 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](#) with you and use it when you are unable to wash your hands.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Attending a Gathering

- Bring your own food, drinks, plates, cups and utensils.
- Wear a mask, and safely [store your mask](#) while eating and drinking.
- Avoid going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen.
- Use single-use options, like salad dressing and condiment packets, and disposable items like food containers, plates and utensils.

Hosting a Thanksgiving Gathering

- Have a small [outdoor meal](#) with family and friends who live in your community.
- Limit the number of guests.
- Have conversations with guests ahead of time to set expectations for celebrating together.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces and items between use.
- If celebrating indoors, make sure to open windows.
- Limit the number of people in food preparation areas.
- Have guests bring their own food and drink.
- If sharing food, have one person serve food and use single-use options, like plastic utensils.

Thanksgiving Travel

- Check travel restrictions before you go.
- Get your [flu shot](#) before you travel.
- Always wear a mask in public settings and on [public transportation](#).
- [Stay at least 6 feet apart](#) from anyone who is not in your household.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your mask, eyes, nose and mouth.
- Bring extra supplies, such as masks and hand sanitizer.

For more information about safely celebrating Thanksgiving log on to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>.

For updates on COVID-19, follow @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Twitter and @GaDPH and @GovKemp on Facebook.

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