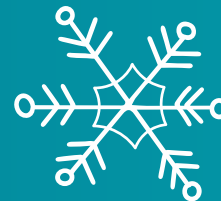


HAVING A COVID-SAFE WINTER HOLIDAY SEASON & HAPPY NEW YEAR



Guidance for Families and Individuals

The winter holidays are a time for joyous celebrations with family and friends, festive community events, and beloved traditions. Luckily, many holiday activities can be held outside, but there are still risks because of the level of COVID-19 spread in LA County. This guide offers ideas on how to reduce your risk of COVID-19 while celebrating the winter holidays.

It is important to think about your (and your family's) level of risk for getting COVID-19 when planning your winter holiday activities. Also remember where COVID-19 spreads more easily:

- **Closed spaces** with poor airflow.
- **Crowded places** where there are many people from different households.
- **Close contact** settings especially where people are talking, shouting, singing, or laughing close together.



Get vaccinated now. It will help to protect you and your loved ones for the winter holidays and beyond. Encourage unvaccinated family and friends age 5 and older to get vaccinated as soon as possible. If you, or anyone you know, are due for an **additional dose or booster dose**, be sure to get that extra protection now before the holidays. This is especially important if you will be traveling or visiting with others. Remember, it takes two weeks for the COVID-19 vaccines to be fully effective. Make sure to get the flu vaccine as well. See **Get Vaccinated** for details.

Parents can find resources about COVID-19 vaccines for children and teens at ph.lacounty.gov/covidinfoparents.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Outdoor winter activities with plenty of space and good airflow are safer than indoor activities. It is strongly recommended that high risk activities—singing, chanting, or caroling to name a few—take place outside with at least 6 feet of distance between people whose vaccination status you don't know. Don't forget to physically distance when attending outdoor events with large crowds. Bring and wear a mask if you cannot keep your distance.



Ideas for Safer Community Activities Include:

- Outdoor Christmas tree, Hannukah menorah, or Kwanzaa kinara candle lightings.
- Holiday parades and light displays.
- Las Posadas community processions.
- Open-air craft fairs.
- Visits with Santa Claus hosted outdoors.





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Be prepared. Be sure to check if a holiday event requires proof of full vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test before buying a ticket or visiting. See ph.lacounty.gov/publicsettings for more information.

If the event is indoors, lower your risk by avoiding crowds, go during non-peak hours, wear a **more protective mask**, and limit how long you are there. See ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk for more tips.

Attend outdoor or virtual services if possible. Check with your place of worship to see if they offer virtual services or if they are holding services outdoors. See [Best Practices for Communities of Faith](#) to learn more about how communities of faith can enhance safety and lower the risk of spreading COVID-19.

PRIVATE GATHERINGS

The winter holidays often mean that many generations gather together to celebrate. Take extra precautions if there will be people in attendance who are not fully vaccinated or who are at a higher risk of getting severe illness if they get infected. This includes **older adults** and those with **certain medical conditions**. The risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus is much lower if everyone is fully vaccinated and has gotten their boosters. The safest option is to gather in-person only with members of your household and to celebrate virtually with other family and friends. Consider this option if you have loved ones who have weak immune systems or who are not yet fully vaccinated.

Tips for Safer In-Person Holiday Gatherings:

For the many people wishing to celebrate in-person, the suggestions below provide added layers of protection. Use good judgment to reduce the risk of COVID-19 among your family and friends.

Plan Ahead

- **Stay local** until everyone in your household is fully vaccinated. A booster dose is a great way to get extra protection if you are if you are age 18 and over. If you do choose to travel with unvaccinated family members, follow **travel guidance**. For those who are not fully vaccinated, this includes getting tested and completing quarantine before joining any holiday gatherings or celebrations.
- **Gather outdoors if possible.** Outdoors is safer than indoors, especially when masks are off for eating and drinking. If you can, plan to have at least the meal and drinks outside. If outdoors isn't possible or practical, improve the airflow indoors. Open windows and doors, use fans and portable air cleaners, run heating and air. Be sure to upgrade or replace filters ([see CDPH fact sheet](#)).
- **Keep your gatherings small.** Avoid mixing with many different families or friend groups. Don't be afraid to ask about people's vaccination status and recent risks before attending a holiday party, celebration, or gathering.
- **Take extra precautions** if you will be gathering with people from other parts of the country or from different households that include unvaccinated people or those at high risk of severe illness. Keep your **COVID-19 risk low** for a couple weeks before (e.g., avoid crowded indoor spaces) and/or get tested before joining the group. Plan to get a viral test as close to the event as possible. A rapid test, including a self-test could be used for this purpose. If you get a laboratory PCR test, make sure that the result will be back in time. For more information, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidtests.

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On the day of any in-person holiday gatherings.

- **Stay away if sick.** If you are sick, have symptoms, or have a positive test, stay away from others. Don't host or attend in-person parties or gatherings.
- **Get a COVID-19 viral test** before joining with others as an added precaution. This is a good idea if you are gathering with people who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID, especially if you or others at the celebration are not fully vaccinated or have been in crowded indoor places in the past two weeks.
- **Wear a face mask** when gathering indoors, except when eating and drinking. Remember to bring a mask in case you need it. Wear a mask outside if the gathering is crowded with people who are unvaccinated, whose vaccine status you don't know, or who are at increased risk of severe illness. Learn how to get the most out of your mask at ph.lacounty.gov/masks.
- **Keep distance while eating** unless everyone is fully vaccinated. Set tables so that people sit with others from the same household where possible. Provide distance between non-household members. This is especially important if eating indoors.
- **Keep hands clean.** Clean hands before and after preparing food. Have hand sanitizer available for guests. Remind kids to not touch their face or eat with unclean hands. Consider having assigned servers to reduce the number of people touching shared serving utensils.
- **Choose outdoors for singing holiday songs and caroling.** Singing, chanting, or caroling are high risk activities for spreading COVID-19. Opt for outdoors if possible and maximize distance between participants.

Thank you for helping to reduce the risk of COVID-19 for family, friends, and everyone in the community.

Have a happy and safe holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Learn more about keeping safe and preventing spread at ph.lacounty.gov/reducerisk

GET VACCINATED

To find a free COVID-19 vaccine near you, visit VaccinateLACounty.com and click on "[How To Get Vaccinated](#)" or call the Public Health Vaccine Call Center at **833-540-0473**, open daily **8:00 am to 8:30 pm**. No appointment is needed at many locations, and free transportation may be available. You do not need insurance, and you will not be asked about your immigration status. In-home vaccination is available for people who are home-bound.

To find flu vaccines near you, call your doctor or local pharmacy or call 2-1-1 LA County information line (you can ask for locations where flu vaccines are low cost or free). See "[Where Can I get a Flu Immunization](#)" for more information.

