



Recommendations for COVID-Safe Winter Holiday Activities

Holiday events and gatherings can pose a risk of spreading COVID-19. Holiday events at school, in the community, and at home should all be conducted with COVID-19 health precautions in place. By following a few basic safety steps, schools and families can ensure that holiday activities and events are not just fun but also safe for all members of the community, including young children who are not vaccinated.

Get fully vaccinated.

Vaccines (including a booster shot, if eligible) are the best protection against infection. All three vaccines that are currently available are safe and effectively reduce the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19. Vaccination options are listed on the [San Mateo County Health website](#). Vaccinations are now widely available for children ages 5-11.

Stay home if you are not feeling well.

Do not attend celebrations or participate in group activities if you are feeling sick or experiencing symptoms. A runny nose, headache, and vomiting are all [symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Stay home if you have been exposed to COVID-19 and are not vaccinated.

If you have come into close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and you are not yet fully vaccinated, stay home.

Wear a face mask.

Even if you are vaccinated, you can contract COVID-19 and carry and spread the virus without showing symptoms. Masks are an effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, is still required to wear a face mask in indoor public settings.
- Face masks are recommended in private settings where some attendees are not vaccinated or when the setting includes people who are otherwise medically vulnerable or whose immune systems are compromised.





Keep gatherings small.

Large gatherings, even if they are outdoors, pose a risk for transmission of COVID-19. Get tested 1-3 days before holiday gatherings.

Gather outdoors.

Indoor activities where people from different households mix pose a higher risk for transmission of COVID-19—especially for persons not yet vaccinated.

Be cautious when eating.

Eat outdoors, if possible, maintain distance while eating and drinking, and practice good hand hygiene.

Follow this guidance when traveling:

- Although the [CDC](#) and [CDPH](#) have minimal requirements concerning travel, everyone should follow the same steps: get vaccinated, avoid travel when sick, wear a mask when using public transportation or with others outside the household, and avoid large gatherings.
- Get tested 1-3 days prior to travel.
- Test upon return from travel. Test again 3-5 days later.
- Schools should not exclude students who have traveled; however, they may want to [increase their testing](#) cadence of staff and students during and after peak holiday times.
- Encourage families who traveled internationally to follow related [CDC travel guidance](#).

After an Event, Gathering, or Travel

- To further protect yourself and loved ones, be sure to self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after participating in celebrations, activities, or travel.
- Pay special attention from days 3-7 following activities, as this is when people are most likely to develop symptoms.
- If you learn you have been in close contact with someone who tests positive, get tested and, if not fully vaccinated, stay home to quarantine.
- If you are not feeling well or test positive, stay home regardless of vaccination status.
- Children and youth who attend a TK-12 school and are unvaccinated do not qualify for modified quarantine if either of the following occur:
 - The event took place outside a school setting
 - All attendees at an event were not wearing face masks