



State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Public Health

COVID-19

Small Social Gatherings Safety Tips

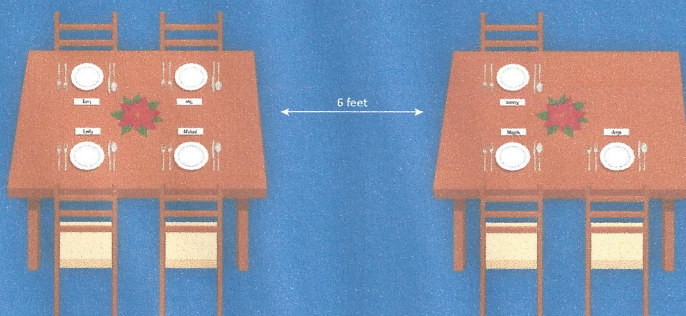
Get your flu-shot prior to visiting friends and family during the flu season.



Influenza activity begins in the month of October and often peaks in the winter months so the time to get your flu shot is now.

Allow about 2 weeks for the flu shot to be active in protection.

Plan with care where each household will be seated before, during, and after the meal.

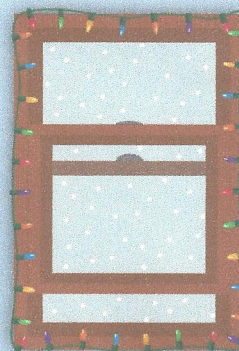


Measure seating spaces and table space to ensure that households are 6 feet apart.

Consider sharing your seating chart with guests in advance.



Consider creating additional ventilation by opening windows slightly where possible.



Remember to be sure that food is served with utensils or individually prepared.



Having one household at a time approach the food serving area will prevent congregating or gathering in the kitchen/serving area.

Provide paper towels in the bathroom in place of a communal/shared hand towel.



Consider placing hand sanitizer throughout the house as well as disinfectant/wipes.



Small Social Gatherings Safety Tips

September 22, 2020

Small social gatherings are places where COVID-19 can quickly spread. Also, as we start thinking ahead to special holidays and family get-togethers, here are some tips to help small social gatherings greatly reduce the propensity for spread during this time of pandemic. Small holiday gatherings must be planned with great care in order to be as safe as possible. Here are some crucial safety tips to help reduce risk of infection:



- ✓ You should get your flu-shot prior to visiting friends and family during the flu season. Influenza activity begins in the month of October and often peaks in the winter months so the time to get your flu shot is now.
- ✓ Take special care to avoid exposure during the two weeks prior to an in-person event in order to prevent asymptomatic spread of COVID-19.
- ✓ Know the infection rates in the area and consider virtual events or deferring events ([click here to find area rates](#)).

- ✓ Travel with care to avoid exposure during two weeks prior to a small holiday gathering ([click here to see travel guidance](#)).

- ✓ If your work entails remote modalities, consider checking with employer to see if remote work might be possible during this time.

- ✓ Elder and immunocompromised individuals should consider refraining from in-person events.

- ✓ Consider special virtual meetings for youth and adults, with a test-run in advance.

- ✓ Virtual events can include creative backgrounds, prerecorded greetings, and video games.

- ✓ For in-person small gatherings, let your guests know ahead of time what you will be doing and your expectations for creating safe in-person holiday/social gatherings in your home. The following safety tips are crucial for the safety of you family and friends and should be an essential part of your planning.



- ✓ Gather outdoors if weather permits, as much as is reasonably possible.
- ✓ Indoor gatherings should include guests wearing face coverings, except to eat and drink.
- ✓ Indoor gatherings should include six feet of social distancing between members of different households.
- ✓ Even last minute/unannounced casual visits, whether in an apartment or single family setting, should include mask wearing and social distancing.

- ✓ Limit gathering to a manageable number of people for which social distancing is possible before, during, and after the meal.

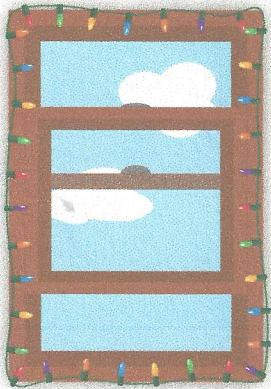
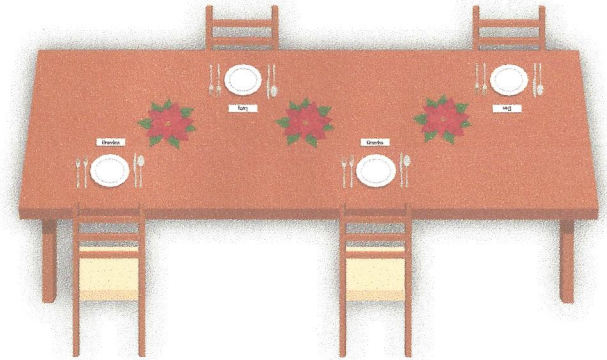
- ✓ Consider the number of people and the number of households your home will comfortably accommodate while maintaining social distancing before, during, and after the meal.

- ✓ Plan with care where each household will be seated before, during, and after the meal.



Small Social Gatherings Safety Tips

- ✓ Measure seating spaces and table space to ensure that households are 6 feet apart, this will determine the capacity that will be safe for your family and friends.
- ✓ Plan this specifically for each seating space that you plan to use, not just in the formal eating area.
- ✓ Invite your guests to the seat that you have prepared for them.
- ✓ Consider sharing your seating chart with guests in advance.
- ✓ Follow-through on the safety plans that you have thoughtfully prepared.



- ✓ Consider creating additional ventilation by opening windows slightly where possible.
- ✓ Remember to be sure that food is served with utensils or individually prepared.
- ✓ Having one household at a time approach the food serving area will prevent congregating or gathering in the kitchen/serving area.
- ✓ Offering straws with beverages can help promote continuous wearing of face coverings.
- ✓ Take care with adherence to careful plans even during longer small gathering events.
- ✓ If hosting overnight guests, integrate the same principles throughout the visit.

- ✓ Provide paper towels in the bathroom in place of a communal/shared hand towel.
- ✓ Consider placing hand sanitizer throughout the house as well as disinfectant/wipes

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>



As the holidays and cooler weather approaches, prepare for these very special occasions by planning with care using these *Small Social Gatherings Safety Tips*.