

News

November 9, 2020

Health Officials from Ten Bay Area Counties Issue Recommendations for Safer Holidays and Travel

SAN MATEO COUNTY, Calif. – Health Officers from the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma, and the city of Berkeley today issued joint recommendations for staying safe during the holidays. The recommendations cover gatherings and travel, with recommended steps to reduce risk.

“The holiday season is a great time to provide joy and emotional support for dear friends and extended family members,” said Curtis Chan, MD, San Mateo County’s deputy health officer. “But we must be very careful because much of the transmission of COVID-19 occurs from people without symptoms. Let’s do everything we can to prevent infections to families and friends, and especially grandparents. I’ve appreciated creative ideas by communities and businesses to support each other with old and new technology. The holiday traditions of writing letters, making cards, and sending gifts is very meaningful, particularly to those becoming more socially isolated. Video gatherings and greetings, streaming videos, and other activities can spark joy and spread love during these difficult times.”

The joint recommendations advise the public that if you gather in person, keep it small, short, stable, and outdoors. Also, nonessential travel, including holiday travel, is not recommended. Travel outside the Bay Area will increase your chance of getting infected and spreading the virus to others after your return. For those who are traveling, there are tips to help avoid catching COVID-19 or spreading it to fellow travelers. If you travel outside the Bay Area, it is strongly recommended that you self-quarantine for 14 days after your return if your activities while travelling put you at higher risk of getting COVID-19.

The recommendations are consistent with the state’s directives on private gatherings: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Guidance-for-the-Prevention-of-COVID-19-Transmission-for-Gatherings-10-09.aspx>

CELEBRATE WITHOUT GATHERING

The safest way to celebrate this holiday season is virtually or with members of your household. Gathering with people outside your household – even extended family –

increases the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. There are many ways to enjoy the holidays with loved ones without gathering:

- Enjoy holiday traditions at home with your household
- Decorate your home and/or yard
- Share a virtual meal with family and friends
- Host online parties and/or contests
- Prepare meals using traditional recipes and deliver to family and neighbors
- Attend holiday movie nights at drive-in venues
- Visit holiday-themed outdoor art installations
- Participate in drive-by events where everyone stays in their vehicles

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