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Mono County Health Department

www.monohealth.com/Coronavirus

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STATE ISSUES NEW GATHERING GUIDANCE FOR A SAFER THANKSGIVING AND HOLIDAY SEASON

November 17, 2020 – COVID-19 (Coronavirus) poses increasingly severe risks to communities nationwide, and requires everyone to follow necessary precautions, and to adapt the way they live, work, and play. This is urgent in Mono County and the Town of Mammoth with our infection rate rapidly rising and the onset of cooler weather and more indoor activity.

Updated [Guidance for the prevention of COVID-19 transmission for gatherings](#) from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) on November 13, 2020 provides guidelines for Californians to gather outside their household, and replaces the October 9, 2020 and other prior gatherings guidance. Gatherings are defined as social situations that bring together people from different households at the same time in a single space or place. When people from different households mix, this increases the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

A Mono County Health Order ([October 22, 2020](#)) supplements guidance issued by the CDPH. Within Mono County, all persons must comply with both the State and local gathering Guidance and Orders. Violations may be punishable by law.

*“Gatherings of up to 12 people from a maximum of 3 households should only be **outdoors, and with precautions (face masks and distancing)**. Remember, the fewer the number of people, the safer the gathering. Most infections occur between friends and families, often when an infected person doesn’t know that they have the virus. I’m really worried about the upcoming holidays and ask people to think hard about their plans and to please consider changing them if they involve gatherings of more than one household, even among family members.”* stated Dr. Tom Boo, Mono County Public Health Officer. *“For those who do choose to gather despite our advice, be safe even around friends and family by*

wearing masks, keeping distance and washing hands, as you would with strangers. Avoid singing and shouting. Even loud talking will produce more airborne virus.”

Public health officials nationwide and in Mono County have identified small, private social gatherings as a major cause of sky-rocketing COVID-19 cases. In general, the more people from different households a person interacts with at a gathering, the closer the physical interaction is, and the longer the interaction lasts, the higher the risk that a person with a COVID-19 infection, symptomatic or asymptomatic, may spread it to others.

The risk indoors is much higher than outdoors - possibly 20 times higher according to some studies. Good ventilation reduces indoor risk, whether it is an efficient HVAC system or open doors and windows. Wind and air in outdoor spaces rapidly reduce the amount of airborne virus around an infectious person.

The safest way to celebrate Thanksgiving this year is to celebrate with people in your household unit. Spending Thanksgiving with people outside your household is strongly discouraged, however if you do choose to do so, please take steps to make your celebration safer by following the recommendations listed below and by visiting the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/thanksgiving.html>.

“Thanksgiving is traditionally a time for gathering with family and friends, and to celebrate the blessings of the year,” stated Dr. Tom Boo, Mono County Public Health Officer. *“This year, however, we’re urging Mono County residents to skip indoor gatherings and stick with Zoom or Facetime. This is hard; we’re all tired of it, and we recognize the sacrifices that have been made, and the disappointments that have been experienced throughout the year. However, recent advancements with the COVID-19 vaccination trials provide hope that there is a light at the end of this long, dark tunnel...”*

If gathering indoors this Thanksgiving or holiday season, please adhere to the following additional recommendations:

- Limit the gathering to two hours or less. The longer the duration, the risk of transmission increases.
- Keep the households that you interact with stable over time. By spending time with the same people, risk of transmission is reduced.

- Increase fresh air circulation by opening windows or doors, as much as possible.
- Stay home if you are experiencing any COVID-19-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, night sweats, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tiredness, muscle or body aches, headaches, confusion, or loss of sense of taste/smell).
- Avoid gatherings if you are at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (such as older adults and people with chronic medical conditions).
- Provide at least 6 feet of seating distance (in all directions—front-to-back and side-to-side) between members from different household units.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Wear your mask at all times when you are not eating or drinking.

On November 13, 2020, CDPH issued a [travel advisory](#) for non-essential travel. Californians are encouraged to stay home or in their region and avoid non-essential travel to other states or countries. Avoiding travel can reduce the risk of virus transmission and bringing the virus back to California. People arriving in California from other states or countries, including returning California residents, should practice self-quarantine for 14 days after arrival. These people should limit their interactions to their immediate household.

Experts say the United States is entering the most dangerous phase of the pandemic yet, so before planning Thanksgiving this year, ask yourself, “Can I live with not having a traditional Thanksgiving?” Or perhaps the larger question is, “Can you live with a scenario where someone — or many people — at the gathering get COVID-19?”

All Mono County residents and visitors are asked to do their part to **#StaySafeToStayOpen**. This is more than a hashtag – it needs to become a way of life. Additional information regarding the Blueprint for a Safer Economy is available online: <https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap-counties/> or by visiting the Mono County COVID-19 Portal in English: **MonoHealth.com/Coronavirus** or Spanish: <https://monohealth.com/coronavirus-es>.

Cover. Distance. Wash and **#StaySafeToStayOpen!**

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