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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Oct. 21, 2020

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MDHHS provides COVID-19 guidance for holiday travel and gatherings

LANSING, Mich. – The holiday season will be different for Michiganders this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure families do not miss out on being together during the holidays, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has issued guidance on [how to travel](#) and [gather](#) safely during the holidays.

“Celebrating the holiday season with family and friends is one of our most cherished traditions,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “Even though the way we celebrate may have to be different, the guidance issued today shows there are still many ways to spend quality time with family and friends safely during this festive season.”

Traveling and in-person gatherings increase the chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others. However, if you decide to travel for the holidays, follow these safety measures to protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- Wear a mask and keep your nose and mouth covered when in public places.
- Avoid close contact by staying at least 6 feet apart from anyone who is not from your household.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

In addition to the MDHHS guidance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has the following resources to help determine if you should travel during the holidays:

- [Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Know Your Travel Risk](#)
- [Know When to Delay Your Travel to Avoid Spreading COVID-19](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Travel Advisories](#)

Individuals who should avoid attending or hosting in-person holiday celebrations with people who do not live in their household, include those who:

- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have not met the [criteria for when it is safe to be around others](#).

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- Have symptoms of COVID-19 or are waiting for COVID-19 viral test results.
- May have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, or live or work with someone at increased risk of severe illness.

The new guidance also urges Michiganders to consider hosting virtual festivities instead of in-person holiday gatherings if there is a risk of community spread based on the risk identified in the [MI Safe Start map](#). If an in-person gathering is hosted, it should be held outdoors if possible. Indoor festivities should avoid crowded, poorly ventilated or fully enclosed indoor spaces, and should be limited to 10 people or less per [MDHHS Oct. 9 Emergency Epidemic Order](#). In addition, attendees of indoor or outdoor festivities should:

- Social distance.
- Wear cloth masks.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Keep safe around food drinks, including following good hygiene and limiting the amount of people in areas where food is prepared.
- Bring food and drinks for themselves and members of their household. Avoid potluck gatherings.
- Have one person serve all shareable food and consider using single-use items for condiments, plates and utensils.

Read the full [“Celebrating the Holidays During COVID-19”](#) guidance for additional tips to consider before, during and after a gathering to stay safe this holiday season.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

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