

CDC GUIDELINES

FOOD AND DRINKS AT SMALL HOLIDAY GATHERINGS



The CDC offers the following considerations to slow the spread of COVID-19 during small gatherings. These considerations are meant to supplement—not replace—any [state, local, territorial](#), or [tribal](#) health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which all gatherings must comply.

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19. It is possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, including food, food packaging, or utensils that have the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

Remember, it is always important to follow [food safety practices](#) to reduce the risk of illness from common foodborne germs.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves and for members of their own household only; avoid potluck-style gatherings.
- Wear a mask while preparing food for or serving food to others who don't live in your household.
- All attendees should have a plan for where to [store their mask](#) while eating and drinking. Keep it in a dry, breathable bag (like a paper or mesh fabric bag) to keep it clean between uses.
- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill, if possible.
- Have one person who is wearing a mask serve all the food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, plates and utensils, and condiments.
- Make sure everyone [washes their hands](#) with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after preparing, serving, and eating food and after taking trash out. Use [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Designate a space for guests to wash hands after handling or eating food.
- Limit crowding in areas where food is served by having one person dispense food individually to plates, always keeping a minimum of a 6-foot distance from the person whom they are serving. Avoid crowded buffet and drink stations.
- Change and launder linen items (e.g., seating covers, tablecloths, linen napkins) immediately following the event.
- Offer no-touch trash cans for guests to easily throw away food items.
- Wash dishes in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water immediately following the gathering.



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