

HOLIDAY PLANNING FOR THIS COVID YEAR

STAY SAFE – STAY HOME

2020 has been a difficult year. We've all had to give up a lot. Now it's the holiday season, a favorite time of year for many. Do we have to give up celebrating the holidays, too?

As predicted, the world, the US and Oregon are all seeing significant increases in Covid-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths. We do not yet have a safe and effective vaccine, nor do we have a lot of well-documented treatments. Personal Protective Equipment is still in short supply. Hospitals are filling up all over the US.

What we do have is three simple Public Health measures to decrease the spread of Covid-19. These measures are:



Wash your hands

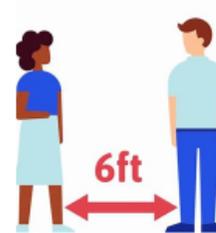


and

Wear your mask

and

Watch your distance



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For the last several weeks, cases of Covid-19 have been traced more to small-medium social get-togethers than to large, crowded events. When we get together with our families, it's hard not to hug, to share food, to talk or sing together. You can't eat a holiday meal while wearing a mask. Often, the family members you want to gather with have travelled from elsewhere, often by plane and through crowded airports. Even if the family is all driving to your home, they may not have been completely careful with

their own precautions. Having a negative Covid test before travelling isn't helpful, because such tests can be falsely negative.

Young healthy people have a lower rate of severe Covid-19 illness, but it can still be a serious disease. Young people make up the majority of positive Covid-19 tests in Oregon, but people older than 70 make up the majority of deaths. A young person travelling home from college may have no symptoms, but she could be infected and able to spread Covid-19 to her parents or grandparents.

Bottom line, holiday celebrations in this Covid Year are risky. Your safest choice is to limit in-person celebrating to the people you live with. If you have been in a "pandemic pod" with another family, you can include them, if you're sure all of you have been following the 3 W's. Gatherings should be limited to no more than 6 people. It's safer if you don't travel far – driving a short distance is OK, but if you drive for hours and have to stop at rest stops or restaurants, it's riskier.

Our recommendation for this pandemic year is to **STAY HOME AND STAY SAFE**. Celebrate remotely with your friends and family. That way, we can all be together next year!