

Socialize safely as businesses open up

The safest move continues to be to staying at home as much as possible. However, many businesses and community centers are opening their doors again. If you do venture out, there are ways to protect yourself, minimize close contact with others, and reduce your exposure to COVID-19. Here are some guiding principles to keep in mind to protect yourself and others during different social situations.

Before you head out, follow guidance for where you live. Check your city or state health department's website for information about local restrictions. Call the business you will be visiting directly to ask what prevention strategies they are using before you go. As businesses continue to open, guidelines might change. Stay informed. Ask questions. If you do not feel confident about a business's safety practices, postpone your visit. Protecting your health is worth it. The CDC recommends that you follow these steps to keep yourself and others healthy.

During this time, it is essential that you:

- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, which include a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who do not live in your household. This is especially true when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Use social distancing (at least 6 feet away from others).
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

Grocery store

- Avoid shopping if you are sick.
- Order online or use curbside pickup if possible.
- Wear a cloth face covering.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- If shopping in person, go during hours when fewer people will be there.
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness, find out if the store has special hours for people at higher risk.
- Disinfect the shopping cart. Use disinfecting wipes if available.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- After leaving the store, use hand sanitizer.
- When you get home, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Hosting gatherings

- Remind guests to stay home if they are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Host your gathering outdoors, when possible.
- Encourage social distancing.
- Wear cloth face coverings when less than 6 feet apart from people or indoors.
- Consider providing face coverings for guests or asking them to bring their own.
- Consider providing hand sanitizer in addition to clearly marked hand-washing areas.

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when entering and exiting social gatherings.
- Remind guests to wash their hands before serving or eating food.
- Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so guests do not share a towel.
- Encourage guests to bring their own food and drinks.
- If serving any food, consider identifying one person to serve all food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.

Gyms or fitness centers

- Call ahead to learn the prevention practices the facility is using.
- Use options for online reservations and check-in systems when available.
- Limit activity indoors, especially group activities.
- Use social distancing and limit physical contact.
- Take extra precautions with shared equipment
- Ensure equipment is clean and disinfected.
- Wear a cloth face covering.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home.

Places of worship

- Before visiting a place of worship, check to see if they are limiting the size of gatherings.
- Seek out services held in large, well-ventilated areas or hosted in outdoor settings.
- Wear a cloth face covering.
- Continue social distancing during services.
- Avoid contact with frequently touched items, such as books.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home

Salons

- When making a hair or nail appointment, ask about safety measures.
- Look for touchless payment options.
- Limit contact with common surfaces or items.
- Wear a cloth face covering.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when you get home.

Gas station

- Use disinfecting wipes on handles and buttons before you touch them (if available).
- After fueling, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home or to somewhere with soap and water.

Pharmacy

- If possible, call in prescription orders ahead of time and use a drive-thru window, curbside pickup, mail order, or other delivery service.
- Wear a cloth face covering when doing any in-person exchanges.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while in lines.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when you arrive home or to your destination where a restroom is available.

Banking

- Call your bank and ask about options for telephone or virtual meetings to use banking services.
- Use drive-thru banking services, automated teller machines (ATM), or mobile banking apps for routine transactions that do not require face-to-face assistance as much as possible.
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol after any deposit, withdrawal, exchange, drive-thru visit, or use of an ATM.
- Wear a cloth face covering when doing any in-person exchanges.
- Wash your hands thoroughly when you arrive home or to your destination where a restroom is available.

Dinning out

- Check the restaurant's COVID-19 prevention practices before you go. Ask if all staff are wearing cloth face coverings while at work.
- Wear a cloth face covering as much as possible when not eating.
- Maintain a social distance of 6 feet or more if you are dining with others who do not live with you, in any entryway, hallway, or waiting area.
- When possible, sit outside at tables spaced at least 6 feet apart from other people.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when entering and exiting the restaurant. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

References:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/personal-social-activities.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/beaches-pools.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html>
- <https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2020/coronavirus-reopen-safety-tips.html>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-safety-tips/art-20485967>

Source:

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