

COVID-19

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Guidance for Informal Social Gatherings: Appendix CC

Effective as of April 15, 2021

COVID-19 continues to pose a severe risk to communities and requires all people in California to follow necessary precautions until enough people in the state become fully vaccinated. Until then, the safest way to gather continues to be limiting mixing among different households and, if gathering occurs, spending time outdoors to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 from one person to another. When people from different households mix, the risk of COVID-19 transmission increases, including highly contagious variants that have been seen in California.

In general, the risk that a person with a COVID-19 infection, symptomatic or asymptomatic, may spread it to others, increases:

- In indoor spaces;
- 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

Although community transmission of COVID-19 remains at a moderate level in Los Angeles County, some informal social gatherings of non-household members can occur with safety measures in place to reduce the risk of transmission during the gathering.

Defining Informal Social Gatherings

Gatherings are defined as social situations that bring together people from different households¹ at the same time in a single space or place. Informal social gatherings, specifically:

- Have no defined guest list
- Do not involve meetings, conferences, receptions or other ceremony or performance. These types of events must follow the appropriate Los Angeles County Department of Public Health protocol:
 - [Private Events \(Meetings, Receptions, and Conferences\)](#)
 - [Live Events or Performances \(Outdoor Seated\)](#)
 - [Live Events or Performances \(Indoor Seated\)](#)

This guidance outlines the safety measures to take during informal social gatherings. All persons planning to host or participate in an informal social gathering must comply with this guidance to help lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission during the gathering.

Fully Vaccinated People

Vaccines are effective at protecting people from getting sick, and as such, people who have been fully vaccinated can begin doing certain activities that previously posed greater risk. At informal social gatherings where everyone

¹ A household is defined as a group of people who live together in a single dwelling like a house or apartment. A household does not include people who live together in an institutional group setting such as in a dormitory, fraternity, sorority, monastery, convent, or nursing home. It also does not include commercial group living settings like boarding houses, hotels, or motels.



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is fully vaccinated, masking and distancing are not required. However, fully vaccinated people should follow all measures in this guidance, including wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and avoiding crowds indoors when mixing at a gathering with others who are not fully vaccinated. An exception can be made at gatherings where everyone is fully vaccinated except for members of one household and none of the individuals living at that household is [at high risk for getting severely ill from COVID-19](#).

People are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 at 2 or more weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or 2 or more weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).² Children younger than two (2) years old who are with their parent, guardian, or sponsor at a gathering of fully vaccinated persons are considered, for purposes of physical distancing, to be fully vaccinated.

1. Attendance

Attendance at all gatherings is limited according to the County's Risk Level. Right now, Los Angeles County is in the Orange Tier of the State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy, which limits the number of people that can attend a gathering to the following:

Maximum Number of People that Can Attend a Gathering in Orange Tier (Tier 3, Moderate Virus Transmission)	
Outdoor gatherings	Maximum of 50 people
Indoor gatherings (STRONGLY DISCOURAGED)	Maximum 25% of occupancy where capacity limits exist, or 25 people, whichever is fewer

For informal social gatherings that bring persons together solely for religious worship, counseling, or study, all infection control protocols still apply, except for the capacity limits mentioned in this protocol are strong recommendations. All attendees of gatherings for religious worship or study must wear face coverings, remain socially (physically) distanced from others, and practice hand hygiene.

2. Location

- **Gather outdoors:** Gatherings that occur outdoors are significantly safer than indoor gatherings. If the gathering is under a covered outdoor space or structure, such as a canopy or tent, the structure or canopy should be: a) without walls or b) with only two walls that do not touch or form a corner, allowing sufficient, unrestricted outdoor air movement resulting in cross-ventilation. If the outdoor structure does not meet these requirements, the gathering is considered indoors, and all applicable indoor gathering modifications apply.
- **Increase air circulation if you can't avoid gathering indoors:** Indoor gatherings are strongly discouraged, but if they can't be avoided due to weather conditions, increase fresh air circulation by opening windows or doors, as much as possible, especially in rooms where people are gathering.

² This guidance applies to COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/ Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. Considerations for applying this guidance to vaccines that are not FDA-authorized include whether the vaccine product has received emergency approval from the World Health Organization or authorization from a national regulatory agency. As additional vaccines are approved this guidance will be updated.



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- **Do not mix your gathering with another group's gathering:** Multiple unique gatherings cannot be jointly organized or coordinated to occur in the same public park or other outdoor space at the same time since this would exceed the permitted limits.

3. Measures to Lower the Risk for Hosts and Participants

(unless everyone at the gathering is fully vaccinated)

Limit the Guest List

- **Limit attendance at gatherings to reduce the risk of spread** as it lowers the number of different people who are interacting.
- **Keep the households that you interact with stable over time.** Limit the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 by spending time with the same people if you are not fully vaccinated. Participating in multiple gatherings with different households or groups is strongly discouraged.

Keep It Short

- Gatherings should be two hours or less. The longer the duration, the higher the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Wear a Face Mask

- **Keep your mask on:** Wear a face mask at all times, unless ALL guests are fully vaccinated. Infants and children under 2 years of age should not wear a mask. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information about masks.
- **Limit the time you remove your mask:** People at gatherings should only remove or lower their masks when they are actively eating or drinking, or to meet urgent medical needs (e.g., to use an asthma inhaler, take medicine, or if feeling light-headed).

Practice Physical Distancing and Hand Hygiene

- **Maintain at least 6-feet of distance:** For any gatherings permitted under this guidance that include people who are not fully vaccinated, the space must be large enough so that everyone at a gathering can maintain at least 6-feet of physical distance from others (not including their own household members) at all times. Seating must provide at least 6 feet of distance (in all directions—front-to-back and side-to-side) between different households, if not all households are fully vaccinated.
- **Make sure guests wash and sanitize hands often:** Everyone at a gathering should wash their hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **Limit shared items** as much as possible during the gathering.

Reduce the Risk with Eating and Drinking

- **Limit eating and drinking to outdoor areas:** Lowering or removing your mask to eat or drink increases the risk of spreading COVID-19, especially when gatherings include people that are not fully vaccinated. While face coverings are removed for eating or drinking, individuals must stay at least 6 feet away from everyone outside their own household and put their mask back on as soon as they are done.
- **Make sure all guests are seated while eating or drinking:** All guests must be seated while consuming food or drinks. Chairs must be spaced at least six (6) feet apart and tables may be occupied by members of a single household or a group of up to six (6) people from no more than three (3) separate households. If ALL guests are fully vaccinated at an outdoor gathering, tables and chairs do not need to be distanced, and attendees may sit and eat together.
- **Increase air circulation if persons are not able to eat or drink outdoors:** When persons are not able to consume food and drink outdoors, windows and doors should remain open as much as possible to provide good air circulation and ventilation.



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- **Protect others while serving food:** Wear a mask when serving food and drinks and wash or sanitizes your hands often.
- **Make sure guests wash and sanitize hands before eating or drinking:** Remind all persons to wash or sanitize hands before eating or drinking, and after touching shared items that are unavoidable.

Avoid Singing, Chanting, Shouting, Cheering and Similar Activities

- **Limit activities that increase the release of respiratory droplets and fine aerosols into the air:** Singing, chanting, shouting, playing of instruments by mouth, and similar activities significantly increase the spread of the virus, so it's best to avoid them. If your gathering will include one or more of these activities, make sure everyone is outdoors, masked, and that they increase the physical distance between people to 12 feet.
- **Use additional safety measures if wind instruments are played:** Playing of wind instruments (any instrument played by the mouth, such as a trumpet or clarinet) is strongly discouraged, and if played should use protective or tightly woven cloth barriers on the instrument bells or at the end of the instrument to protect from spread of condensation droplets. If music is played, it is recommended that the volume be quiet enough that attendees can speak in a normal voice without shouting.

4. Don't Attend Gatherings If You Feel Sick

Anyone with any COVID-19-like symptoms must stay home and avoid contact with anyone outside their household: Symptoms may include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, night sweats, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tiredness, muscle or body aches, headaches, confusion, or a recent loss of sense of taste/smell.

5. Individuals in a High-Risk Group are Discouraged from Attending Any Gatherings if They are Not Fully Vaccinated

- **People at higher risk of getting severely ill or dying from COVID-19:** Older adults and [people with chronic medical conditions](#) who are not fully vaccinated are strongly urged to not attend any gatherings, especially indoor gatherings.
- **If they do attend any gathering:**
 - **Get some air:** Spend as much time outside, or near outside air flow such as open windows or doors, as possible.
 - **Wear a respirator or mask with multiple layers:** The mask should fit snugly against your nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides, and limit any time at the event with the mask off.
 - **Keep your distance:** Stay at least six feet or farther from others who don't live in your household as much as possible, especially when people are eating or drinking or any time when they are not wearing their masks.
 - **Shorten your visit:** Spend a shorter time at the gathering.

6. If Anyone Does Get Sick After the Gathering

Anyone who gets diagnosed with COVID-19 (tests positive for SARS-CoV-2) within 2 days after attending a gathering must notify the organizer of the gathering and/or the other attendees know of their potential exposure to COVID-19 as soon as possible. If you are the one who is sick and you have not been contacted by Public Health within a week of your positive test, please call and report your case at 833-540-0473. Public Health can provide you with information and determine and help if there is any additional risk of spread.

