

Town of Avon

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, Nov. 23, 2020

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Town of Avon Shares Guidance for Celebrating Thanksgiving Amid COVID-19

AVON -- Town Administrator Gregory S. Enos and Health Agent Kathleen Waldron wish to share health and safety guidance for residents as they finalize plans and prepare for their Thanksgiving celebrations this year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), traveling increases one's potential to be exposed to COVID-19 and of potentially spreading it to others. Staying home and observing the holidays with those in your household or hosting a virtual celebration are the best ways to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

It is important to note that small gatherings are also contributing to the recent rise in COVID-19 cases nationwide, according to the CDC.

Those who still choose to travel or host a small gathering are urged to consider lower risk alternatives and review the precautions they can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

Families welcoming students home from college for the holidays, or any other visitors from out of state, should be mindful of the ongoing travel restrictions in effect throughout the Commonwealth. All travelers arriving from states that are not classified as [lower-risk](#) must complete a [travel form](#) and quarantine for 14 days or obtain a negative COVID-19 test result from a sample taken within 72 hours of arrival in Massachusetts. This includes Massachusetts residents returning from states other than those named. For the most up to date information on the state's travel restrictions, [click here](#).

"As we approach the holiday season, we would like to remind residents to be cognizant of their holiday plans and the potential consequences they may have," Health Agent Waldron said. "We encourage all residents to weigh their options and choose a plan that has the least amount of risk of exposure to COVID-19 while celebrating this year."

Residents are reminded that, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), any time you are around people from outside of your household, you should:

- Wear a face covering, except when eating or drinking.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Practice social distancing and maintain 6 feet of distance from others.
- Be cognizant of those around you who may be at a higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, including older adults and those with certain medical conditions.
- If hosting or attending an indoor gathering, open windows and doors to improve ventilation.

The CDC recommends several lower risk activities to celebrate Thanksgiving this year, including:

- Hosting a Thanksgiving meal with only those who live in your household
- Preparing family and traditional recipes and providing contactless delivery to family and neighbors.
- Hosting a virtual dinner.
- Instead of participating in in-person Black Friday shopping, shop online.
- Watch sports events, parades and movies at home.

Moderate risk activities for this holiday season outlined by the CDC include:

- Hosting a small outdoor dinner with family, friends and loved ones who live locally.
 - Remember: outdoor residential gatherings in Massachusetts are limited to 25 people maximum. All social gatherings must end by 9:30 p.m.
 - To review the CDC's recommendations on hosting gatherings, click [here](#).
- Visit a pumpkin patch or orchard. Familiarize yourself with the COVID-19 expectations of any business before visiting, and be sure the people around you are using hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples, wearing masks and practicing social distancing.
- Go to a small sport event outside, as long as COVID-19 guidance including social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing/sanitizing is being followed.

The CDC warns against the following high risk activities this Thanksgiving:

- Participating in Black Friday shopping in-person or shopping in busy stores before or after Thanksgiving.
- Attending a crowded race, parade or sports event.
- Going to indoor gatherings with people outside of your household. Remember: In Massachusetts, all indoor gatherings are limited to 10 people.

- Avoid using alcohol or drugs, which may impair judgement and impact your ability to practice COVID-19 precautions.

Those planning to host or attend gatherings are encouraged to weigh the level of risk of exposure to COVID-19 they will face. Factors to consider include COVID-19 cases or community spread in the area, indoor versus outdoor gatherings and the availability of ventilation, how long you will be at the gathering, and if those at the gathering practice COVID-19 precautions in their daily lives and while they're at the gathering.

Additionally, residents considering holiday plans are reminded that a negative COVID-19 test result is only reflective of the time the test was taken.

For additional guidance on navigating the holidays amid COVID-19 from the CDC, including additional information on hosting or attending a gathering, food and drinks at small gatherings, travel and overnight stays, and what to do if you're exposed to COVID-19 at a holiday party, click [here](#). For more tips for celebrating Thanksgiving this year from the DPH, click [here](#).

Any resident with questions or concerns is asked to contact the Avon Board of Health at 508-588-0414 ext. 1016, or email kwaldron@avon-ma.gov. To view video updates on Avon's public health data, visit the Town's YouTube page by clicking [here](#).

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