

# Holidays and COVID-19:

## Why NOT To Gather

*Aggressive social distancing efforts in New Jersey were implemented on March 16, 2020 through **Governor Murphy's Executive Order No. 104**. Gatherings were restricted and residents were instructed to work from home if possible. For weeks now, many people have been home and children are learning online with their teachers.*

*And now that we've been home away from others for a long time it's tempting to get together during a special time like a birthday, Easter, Passover or Ramadan.*

***But seeing others can endanger you and your loved ones. Are YOU willing to take that gamble?***

**STAY APART THIS  
HOLIDAY  
YOU CAN ALL BE  
TOGETHER LATER**

## Why practice social distancing and self-quarantine?

Both social distancing and self-quarantine prevent the spread of illness. **Staying home or more than 6 feet away from others limits the ability for droplets to travel from person-to-person** from sneezing, coughing, or even talking. Additionally, staying home reduces risk of exposure to surfaces that may have droplets from an infected person. There is currently no vaccine or specific medication to treat COVID-19, so the only way reduce the number of cases and flatten the curve is social distancing and self-quarantining.



## Spreading the virus without knowing it

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, typically between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). People are thought to be most contagious when they are symptomatic (fever, coughing, shortness of breathe). **The CDC reports that COVID-19 can also be spread up to three days before people show symptoms, which makes holiday gatherings more dangerous.**

## Visiting older family members or friends

If you must visit those who are over the age of 60, be sure that you protect them and yourself by following social distancing guidelines, such as: **washing hands before and after your visit; using hand sanitizer; maintaining at least six feet of distance when possible; avoid touching your face; and coughing or sneezing into your elbow or a tissue and then washing your hands.** If you have early signs of a cold, please stay home and away from your older loved ones.

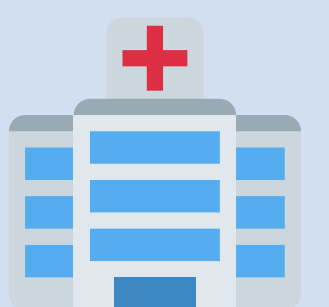


## Avoid risking getting family members ill

There are heartbreaking accounts of entire families falling ill because one person was sick at a family gathering. The very nature of family or friend gatherings are to be in close proximity to the people you love for long periods of time. If one person is sick it can easily spread to extended family members and friends as they convene around a feast. **During this chaotic time it is ok to break social norms and stop gatherings,** your family and friends may be relieved and appreciate the efforts you are making.

## Overwhelming the health care system

By now you have heard of "flattening the curve." The idea is to spread out over a long period of time the number of positive cases rather than have them all become sick during a short period of time. The faster the infection curve rises, the quicker the local health care system gets overloaded beyond its capacity to treat people. There is also the risk of getting our frontline healthcare providers ill and that leaves our health care system more vulnerable.



## Do your part to reduce the spread

**If everyone does their part and takes responsibility to stay home seriously, the New Jersey could see numbers of cases going down. But without your efforts to stay home and avoid others, a big spike in the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths will happen.**

# Prevent the Uninvited Guest: COVID-19

*Easter, Passover and Ramadan holidays will be a little different this year. Families and friends are asked to avoid coming together at a dinner-table and houses of worship. Instead people need to think of creative ways to celebrate while apart.*

**This year, everyone should be celebrating the holiday with as few people as possible.**

**Ideally, only the people you live with!**

*Social distancing orders are in place to prevent you and your loved ones from contracting COVID-19, but that doesn't mean you should celebrate alone.*

## Use social media or video conferencing

There are many platforms (Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, Facetime, Google Hangouts) that will connect you to others. Identify which one you like best and practice before the holiday.



*Select a time during the holiday to connect (ie., for a game, breaking bread, dessert time.)*

## Prepare for the holiday

Call those you want to share the holiday with and coordinate menus, supper time, time for online chat, game time, and other activities. Order food online early to avoid late deliveries or items being unavailable.

*Preparing before the day of will help to avoid any last minute hiccups that could take away from the special day.*



## Attend services from home

Congregations are closed but many are providing streaming services online. Check with your house of worship leaders to see what platform they are using.

*Do something special for either your immediate family, housemate or for those you connect with on video conference (i.e., virtual egg dying, creating paper plate bonnets, sending a card in the mail, or read tradition stories together.*



## Dress up and decorate

It's a special occasion, so celebrate it! Make the holiday as normal as you can by decorating and dressing up.

*On special days something as simple as getting dressed up in your holiday outfit can set the tone for the day.*



## Be mindful of health

In some religions, older populations play a critical role during religious events. So, be mindful of how this population is at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Be creative in ensuring their health and keeping traditions part of your special day.

