

Klamath County Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 prevention tips just in time for Independence Day

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — Independence Day weekend is usually all about celebrating life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. However, as COVID-19 cases surge across much of the nation, people in Southern Oregon may be questioning how to commemorate the day safely.

“We know people are tired of being cooped up at home and are eager to get out and enjoy summer, but cases surged after Memorial Day,” said Klamath County Health Officer Wendy Warren, MD. “We don’t want that to happen over the Independence Day holiday. As we celebrate this weekend, we need to think about the risks associated with our activities.”

People looking for an old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration will have to reconsider: Fireworks in many areas have been canceled, and the fast-changing situation means would-be revelers will want to first check with local health authorities and local event organizers. For those who attend fireworks displays in their community, experts suggest finding a spot to watch from the car, with guaranteed physical distancing.

Wondering whether going to a holiday gathering is worth the risk? Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say the larger the crowd and the longer the interaction, the higher the potential for catching or spreading COVID-19. The risk in each area also rises with that community's level of transmission.

Gatherings of family and friends for cook-outs is a natural part of the holiday celebration. CDC offers the following guidelines for hosting celebrations.

Remind guests to stay home if they are sick

- Remind invited guests to stay home if they have been exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days or are showing COVID-19 [symptoms](#). Anyone who has had [close contact](#) with a person who has COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health. Invited guests who live with those at higher risk should also consider the potential risk to their loved ones.
- Consider keeping a list of guests who attended for potential future [contract tracing](#) needs.

Encourage social distancing

- Host your gathering outdoors, when possible. If this is not feasible, make sure the room or space is well-ventilated (for example, open a window).
- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing. People from the same household can be in groups together and don’t need to be six feet apart – just six feet away from other families.
- If planning activities for adults and/or kids, consider those where social distancing can be maintained, like sidewalk chalk art or frisbee.
- When guests arrive, minimize gestures that promote close contact. For example, don’t shake hands, do elbow bumps, or give hugs. Instead wave and verbally greet them.

Wear cloth face coverings

- Wear [cloth face coverings](#) when less than six feet apart from people or indoors.
- Consider providing face coverings for guests or asking them to bring their own.

Clean hands often

- 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. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Make sure there is adequate soap or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol available in the restrooms and encourage guests not to form a line at the door. Consider also providing cleaning supplies that allow guests to wipe down surfaces before they leave.
- 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.

Limit the number of people handling or serving food

- Encourage guests to bring their own food and drinks.
- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill, if possible.
- If serving any food, consider identifying one person to serve all food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, and condiments, so that multiple people are not handling the items.

Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items

- Use touchless garbage cans or pails.
- Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. [Wash hands](#) after removing gloves.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use when feasible.
- If you choose to use any shared items that are reusable (e.g., seating covers, tablecloths, linen napkins), wash, clean, and sanitize them after the event.