

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Defiance County General Health District Holiday Safety

DEFIANCE, OHIO — Just as the COVID-19 pandemic affected all other activities this year, the Defiance County Health Department recognizes that this holiday season will look and feel quite different. In order to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19, make a plan to celebrate the holidays safely.

The Health Department's COVID-19 website includes a Holiday Safety guides from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). You can view the guides at: www.defiancecohealth.org and click "COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019)."

"Happy Holidays from everyone at Defiance County Health Department. We recommend that the safest way to celebrate is with only people you live with. It is more critical than ever to avoid spending time with people outside your household. If you choose to celebrate with more than those you live with, take steps to make your celebration as safe as possible" said Jamie Gerken, Defiance County Health Commissioner. "It is important this year to take safeguards in our holiday celebration and traditions to stop the spread of COVID-19. With smart actions like wearing a mask, social distancing, limiting the size and number of social gatherings, and good hygiene, the activities we want to do are safer and less likely to be impacted by COVID-19."

The safest gathering will include only people in your own household. If you will host guests, talk ahead of time about ways to keep the group safe, and make sure everyone understands why it's important. Think about factors that impact risk then make a plan to keep higher-risked loved ones safe. Consider:

- **TIME:** How long will we be together? Shorter than usual?
- **PEOPLE:** Will there be fewer attendees than usual, who mostly live together? Are they practicing COVID-19 guidelines?
- **SPACE:** Is it a big place or outside? Is there space to be 6ft apart from others?
- **Number of Social Interactions:** How many holiday activities or social get-togethers will I attend?
- Set up smaller dining areas or card tables as far apart as possible to allow people to be together while keeping distance between groups.
- Instead of potluck-style gatherings, encourage guests to bring food and drinks for themselves and for members of their own household only.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and items between use.
- If celebrating indoors, open windows to improve ventilation.
- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently.
- Remain physically distant from others.
- If you are sick, stay home.

Stay Informed:

- DCGHD website: <http://defiancecohealth.org/coronavirus/>
- Ohio Department of Health website: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov>