



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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How to Plan a COVID-19 Safe Thanksgiving

Residents Encouraged to Plan Ahead, Check for Symptoms Before Heading Out, and Stay Home if Feeling Unwell

Thanksgiving is around the corner. This season, Peterborough Public Health has several recommendations to help residents stay safe and healthy.

“Celebrating Thanksgiving with friends and family is an important part of the holiday. To protect our vulnerable residents, we recommend family and friends screen for COVID-19 symptoms before attending any gatherings. Please stay home if you are feeling unwell or have symptoms,” said Donna Churipuy, Director of Public Health Programs. “This is especially important if celebrating indoors with people who are only partially vaccinated or not vaccinated yet.”

Self-screening can be done online at: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>.

Keep in mind that it is not just yourself, but those around you that precautions help protect. Before visiting or making plans, check if everyone is comfortable with getting together. Gatherings of fully immunized individuals are lower risk, but steps can be taken to reduce this risk even more. Families may also have children too young to be vaccinated, or people who are at higher-risk of serious illness from COVID-19 (such as the elderly or immunocompromised) who should be protected. To help stop the spread during the fourth wave, it is also recommended to limit the number of people you see over Thanksgiving.

For a lower-risk Thanksgiving:

- Plan a small gathering of **fully vaccinated** individuals, indoors or outdoors,
- Plan a small gathering outdoors of individuals with **mixed vaccine status** (where some are vaccinated, some are only partially vaccinated or not vaccinated),
- Before anyone comes in your home, check to make sure they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms, have not been identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19, and are not waiting for a COVID-19 test result,
- Connect with family and friends virtually,
- Stay local, and try to limit travel,
- Continue to practice good hand hygiene,
- Use face coverings in moderate to high risk settings, and whenever required in public spaces.

The following activities are considered moderate risk:

- Small gatherings of individuals with mixed vaccine status, indoors with masking where distancing is not possible,

- Medium-sized gatherings with individuals attending who are not vaccinated, or partially vaccinated,
- Sharing drinks or food.

It is recommended to avoid:

- Going to social gatherings, including religious services, if you are sick, awaiting testing results, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19,
- Large crowds or events - follow capacity limits, social distancing, and masking rules if you decide to attend.

Remember to use safe food handling practices when preparing any meals over Thanksgiving, such as:

- Keeping refrigeration temperatures below 4°C, freezer below -18°C.
- Store all meat in a pan on the lowest shelf in the fridge to prevent spills and contamination with other food,
- Thaw frozen meat in the fridge or under cold, running water,
- Review recommended internal cooking temperatures before you begin cooking,
- Test the internal temperature of the meat with a probe thermometer at the thickest part but away from the bone.

For more safe food handling tips please visit www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca.

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For further information, please contact:

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