



# COVID-19 Protection During the Holiday Season

## Objectives

- Provide important reminders regarding safe practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Recognize the need for SAFE & HEALTHY social interactions during the holiday season.

## Why is This Important?

The holiday season is normally a time when many gather with friends & family. While JOI employees are now accustomed to practicing our safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at work, it's important that we **DO THE RIGHT THINGS OUTSIDE OF WORK** to help end the pandemic.

## KEEPING IT SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON



**2020** has most certainly been a year we will not forget due to the many challenges and changes to our daily lives as a result of COVID-19. JOI employees have much to be proud of—reporting to work each day to continue providing quality to the many people we serve. We are both grateful and proud of each of you for your continued commitment to our organization during these tough times.

Because the pandemic continues, this holiday season brings the need to keep in mind important safety practices that can make a difference in keeping yourself, co-workers, family & friends protected from COVID-19. **There's no "time out" for safety!** It isn't enough to follow all the precautions while at work—we must all continue to take the same precautions outside of work, if not more.

For many people, getting together with loved ones during the holidays is the perfect way to de-stress and reconnect with others. While we can't prevent holiday gatherings altogether, there are lots of small changes you can make to keep it safe. Below are some reminders and additional steps you can take to protect yourself and others from exposure to COVID-19 to help bring this pandemic to an end.

## COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES TO PRACTICE IN & OUT OF WORK



**Carry yourself as if you have COVID-19.** Before you do anything, **ask yourself**, "If I had COVID-19, would it be safe to do this?" If the answer is "no" in any instance, it is likely not a good idea.

**Keep hand sanitizer on hand** in case you aren't able to access a sink to wash your hands with soap & water. Disposable gloves could be useful when using keypads at public places like the grocery store or ATM.



**Distance yourself** from all people you encounter. That means assuming anyone you encounter could have COVID-19 and staying at least 6 feet apart from others whenever possible.

**Wash your hands thoroughly & often** with soap for at least 20 seconds (sing the birthday song 2x for good measure). Be sure to lather between each finger and the tops of your hands too! Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth until your hands are clean.



**Wear a face mask** when out in public. It should fit snugly and cover your nose & mouth completely. The most effective typically have 3 layers of cloth material. Avoid using a mask with ventilation valves or gaiters; experts have reported these types of face covers are worse than not wearing a mask at all.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth** when you are out in public. When you get home, remove your face mask carefully, throw it away if disposable or wash it if made of cloth. Wash your hands before doing anything else.



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## SAFETY TIPS IF ATTENDING OR HOSTING A HOLIDAY GATHERING

Due to the pandemic, celebrating the holidays this year is going to look a lot differently for most people. The safest way to get together would be to do so virtually, but the CDC has provided some guidelines for hosting or attending a gathering during the holiday season.

**Keep it small.** In light of the post-Thanksgiving surge in new cases, it's wise to limit how many people you gather with and ensure that they have been practicing CDC guidelines. Those at a higher risk and/or waiting for COVID-19 test results should avoid attending.

**Establish the ground rules** for your gathering and go over them with your group. Each person should be accountable for their own actions/inactions. If you know someone has not been using safety precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, you are risking your health as well as others by allowing them at your gathering. **Is it worth the risk? No!**

**Ensure good air flow.** Keep your holiday gathering well ventilated by hosting outdoors or by opening windows in an indoor setting. Maintain a 6-foot distance from others at all times and remove your mask only when eating/drinking.

**Limit contact** with high-touch surfaces or shared items by opting for disposable utensils, touchless garbage bins, and paper towels in the bathroom (instead of cloth towels). Designate 1-2 people to help serve food with gloves on and another 1-2 people to disinfect/clean commonly touched surfaces/items. Teamwork makes the dream work!



## SELF-CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Self-care is absolutely necessary in maintaining your mental health, but doing so is especially difficult during the holidays for many. Below are some tips and reminders to keep in mind:

**ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS.** If can't be with loved ones, realize it's normal to feel sadness & grief and that your feelings are valid. **It's okay to not be okay;** take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season and that's quite alright.



**REACH OUT.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits, broaden your friendships, and nurture new bonds. **Remember you also have FREE counseling resources available.**

**PRACTICE GRATITUDE DAILY.** This past year has taught us all a lesson in appreciating the small things & focusing on the things we do have rather than highlighting what we don't have. We all have an abundance of things to be grateful for—remember to stop & smell the roses. Remind yourself of the things that bring you joy, however small.

**Be kind to yourself** and embrace reality as it is. How you speak to yourself reflects how you treat others around you, so practicing kindness & forgiveness with yourself first will make it easier to do so with others. Let's all do our part in spreading kindness & empathy this holiday season.

Many things remain uncertain amid the spread of COVID-19, but there are still things we can do to keep ourselves & each other safe. The effects of even just one person being out of work could add to the burden & stress that each of us may already be experiencing. **As a team, we must look out for each other. Let's all do our part to stay safe in & outside of work. Let's be kind. Let's be considerate. And let's all work together to stay safe.**

*Wishing you all a safe holiday!*