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Moore County Health Department Emphasizes COVID-19 Safety Measures if You Gather Over the Christmas Holiday

Christmas is a time when families typically come together to celebrate their favorite holiday traditions. This year, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, those holiday traditions may need to look a bit different in order to limit exposure to the virus and decrease the spread of COVID-19. The safest way to celebrate Christmas this year is to avoid holiday travel and be with those who live in your household. However, if you do decide to host or attend a holiday gathering, there are things you can do to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19:

- **Do not host or attend a gathering if you're sick, have been diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19, are waiting on COVID-19 test results, or have been told to isolate or quarantine by a health care professional or health department.**

- **Consider getting tested for COVID-19 three to four days before the event but know that this test is one point in time, and you should continue practicing all preventive measures like social distancing and wearing a mask even if you test negative. Keep in mind, test results may be delayed given the Christmas holiday.**

- **Keep the guest list small and stay within gathering limits. Currently in North Carolina, gatherings should be limited to no more 10 people indoors and 50 people outdoors. Remember, the virus can be spread in smaller gatherings as well.**

- **Practice the 3Ws (Wear, Wait, Wash) at all times, but especially around people who are at high risk for COVID-19 complications.**

- **Host gatherings outdoors. If that isn't possible, make sure the room is well ventilated by opening windows and doors.**

- **Arrange space so people from different households can stay distant (at least 6 feet apart) and plan activities where social distancing can be maintained.**

"To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury."
http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/

Environmental Health
Telephone: 910-947-6283
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WIC
Telephone: 910-947-3271
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- **Limit physical contact. No handshaking or hugs. Wave or verbally greet each other instead.**

- **Higher risk guests should strongly consider not attending gatherings and instead attend virtually.**

- **Avoid self-serve food. Use single-use options or designate one person to serve food so that multiple people aren't handling food items.**

- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, and sink faucets.**

"We've all had to make sacrifices this year in order to protect the ones we love from the virus," says Health Director Robert Wittmann. "Unfortunately, we must continue to sacrifice and adapt as the Christmas holiday approaches."

Moore County's COVID-19 case total has risen rapidly in recent weeks. On December 15th, Moore set its highest single day case total at eighty-three and then broke that record within the same week, pushing the mark to eighty-four on December 18th. The County's seven day rolling average of new cases has nearly tripled from what it was one month ago, going from an average of 25.4 new cases per day on November 21st to 68.7 new cases per day as of December 21st.

"We ask that if you do choose to gather, please be cautious and employ all the recommended safety measures," adds Wittmann. "The extra steps that we take to protect ourselves and others over the holiday could prevent unnecessary hardships in the weeks to come."

For more COVID-19 winter holiday guidance, visit the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Website (NCDHHS): https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Winter-Holidays.pdf

Moore County's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard can be found here:
https://moorecounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/4c11e5bf79b64a6e9c8377d5129cc97c

For more information about coronavirus and Moore County's response, please visit www.moorecountync.gov/health, find us on Facebook (Moore County Health Department), and follow us on Twitter (@mocohealth).

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