



# AVOID PUBLIC PLACES (OR AT LEAST GET TOGETHER SAFELY, *FAMILIA*)

U.S. Latinos suffer a higher frequency of illness, hospitalizations, and death brought on by COVID-19.

The surest way to slow the spread of this pandemic virus is to stay home, avoid public places, and stick to virtual get-togethers with *familia* and friends.

However, if you are still going to get together with family and friends who don't live with you, establish a small "quarantine group," discuss risks, and follow the safety tips below.

Remember, people infected by COVID-19 may be contagious without symptoms, even *familia*.

**Start a Quarantine Group:** If you are going to get together with people outside your household, the best way to reduce risk is to establish a small "quarantine group" with family/friends from one or two other households and follow the safety tips below. The people in your quarantine group will be the only people your household gets together with. Everyone in the quarantine group makes a mutual commitment to limit social interactions with people outside the group, to avoid public places, and to follow the above safety tips when getting together with people in the quarantine group.

When considering who will be in your quarantine group, it is important to consider people at increased risk for severe illness and unique social needs. People at increased risk for severe illness include older adults and those with medical conditions, like heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. If someone in your home is at high risk for severe illness, you should avoid all get-togethers. If you have a teen or young adult, you may need to help them establish a quarantine group of their peers separate from the quarantine group for the rest of the household.

Stay updated on local guidance for social gatherings. For example, some cities ban gatherings of 10 people or more. To find out, try this Google search, "[CITY/COUNTY] Health Department COVID-19 guidance for social gatherings."

**Discuss the Risks of Getting Together:** Some public places are inherently risky because people are unable and/or unwilling to practice the three key infection prevention measures: wear a mask, wash hands regularly, and maintain 6 feet physical distance from others. You can determine risk for public places and private gatherings based on these questions:

- Does the location follow infection prevention measures?

You may think you are safe because you aren't going to crowded public places. But a case study found that one family gathering of over 24 people who did not wear face masks or practice physical distancing resulted in the spread of COVID-19 to 41 people. 14 people from four households contracted the disease at the gathering, but before they had symptoms, they continued with their daily lives, spreading COVID-19 to another 27 people in five different households and eight different workplaces.



- Is the location indoors or outdoors?
- How long will you be there?
- How many people are you with and do they follow infection prevention measures?
- How many people will be there and do they follow infection prevention measures?

Whenever you're in the presence of people, be sure to practice the three key infection prevention measures: wear a mask, wash hands regularly, and maintain 6 feet distance from others.

### Safety Tips When Getting Together:

- Before you go: Continuously monitor yourself for symptoms, such as fever (100.3 degrees or higher), chills, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Don't get together with family or friends if you or anyone in your household has symptoms.
- Practice the three key infection prevention measures: You and all guests should wear a mask, wash hands regularly, and maintain 6 feet distance from others.
- No hugging: Avoid hugging and shaking hands.
- Outdoors: Keep it outside for better ventilation and more space. Risk of infection increases when gathering in indoor spaces for prolonged time.
- Seating: Have people bring their own chairs and place more than 6 feet apart.
- Sanitizer: Provide hand sanitizer gel and/or wipes for guests to use regularly.
- Food: Have guests bring their own food and drinks and keep them separate from other families. Avoid shareable foods, like chips and salsa. Every hand that goes in that bowl, touches that serving spoon, or squeezes that mayonnaise bottle is an opportunity for viral transfer.
- Trash: Make garbage bins available to ensure people don't touch used cups and utensils.
- Games: Avoid games that bring you into close contact or result in yelling. Set up physically distant outdoor games (i.e., cornhole, charades, Simon Says, hopscotch, and jump rope).
- Clean and disinfect: Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched more frequently, like doorknobs, tabletops, remotes, tablets, gaming controller, cell phones, and bathrooms. These may provide a vehicle for the virus to find its way into a new household.
- When you return home: Wash your hands and mask.
- Consider keeping a list of attendees for [contact tracing](#) purposes.



**How Not to Offend Family and Friends:** No one likes the implication that they may be the source of a major illness. Chances are, we all have someone we care about who may not believe in coronavirus or may not understand the importance of wearing a mask when with *familia* and friends. They may feel offended if you decline an invitation to get together or if you request everyone at the get-together wear a mask, avoid hugging, and sit 6 feet apart. You may not be able to change their mind about COVID-19, but it isn't your job to. It is your job to protect yourself and your household. Remain strong in your stance to follow infection prevention measures and politely ask them to respect your decision.

A life with a little inconvenience is still a life worth living. We are all in this together. Latinos, *juntos*, we can stop COVID-19!