



The festive season and COVID-19

Festive celebrations can go ahead, but this year we will need to celebrate with our families and friends a little differently.

Currently in Western Australia (WA), the restrictions on gatherings relate to the 2m² rule. This means there must be at least 2m² of available space for each person attending. The rule applies to all gatherings, even if they are held outdoors or are private parties held at home (there are some small exemptions for places of worship and ticketed, seated performances).

Western Australians must continue to keep up physical distancing where possible and practise good personal hygiene to better protect themselves and the general health of our community.

How can I make sure our festive celebrations are COVID safe?

Keep up to date with the status of COVID-19 in WA

An increase in COVID-19 activity may result in events or gatherings being cancelled or postponed. State department advice and legal Directions, that are current at the time of the event or gathering, must be followed.

Remind guests to stay home if they are sick

- Remind invited guests to stay home if they are unwell with any COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild their symptoms may be. It's important to remember that all respiratory infections are contagious, and people should stay home until their acute symptoms resolve. Anyone with any [symptoms should get tested](#).

Decide where you will hold your gathering

- Try to host your function outdoors if you can. Outdoor venues are lower risk for transmission of COVID-19 than indoor venues (provided physical distancing is practised).
- If an outdoor location is not an option, make sure the indoor venue you choose is well ventilated.

Encourage physical distancing where possible

- We all need to follow the current restrictions in WA with regards to the numbers of people who are permitted to gather. In Phase 4, there must be at least 2m² of available space for each person attending.
- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for physical distancing. People from different households should try and stay 1.5m apart wherever possible.
- Be creative and think of new ways to greet your guests as they arrive. Try to avoid close contact gestures such as shaking hands, hugs and kisses.
- Avoid any activity that involves queuing (consider using floor markers).

Plan how you will address hygiene and cleaning considerations

- Provide hand washing facilities:
 - Regularly check hand washing facilities are in good working order and adequately stocked (soap, hot water, paper towel, etc);

- Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so guests do not share a towel;
- Consider creating a “hand sanitising station” for larger gatherings.
- Encourage guests to wash their hands on arrival and at other times, such as:
 - before and after preparing or serving food;
 - before and after eating;
 - after using the bathroom; and
 - after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose.
- Ensure regular [cleaning](#) of shared spaces, such as bathroom facilities and frequently touched surfaces, occurs throughout the duration of your gathering.
- Avoid games or activities that involve shared equipment.

Consider how food will be being handled

- Minimise sharing of utensils where possible (e.g. self-serve buffet) or shared condiments:
 - Consider having one person to serve all food, so multiple people are not handling the serving utensils;
 - Either provide adequate hand sanitising options at shared food tables or consider disposable or single use items.
 - Serve individual portions of meals and snack foods rather than sharing from communal bowls or platters.
- Discourage people from queuing or gathering around buffets and shared food tables.
- COVID-19 is not the only thing we should be concerned about. Always apply the key [safe food principles](#) to reduce the risk of transmitting or contracting a food borne illness:
 - **Clean:** Always clean your hands, benchtops and utensils properly.
 - **Separate:** Keep raw foods (meat, chicken, seafood and eggs) separate from ready-to-eat food.
 - **Cook:** Cook food until it is steaming hot throughout.
 - **Chill:** Avoid the temperature danger zone – keep cold foods cold, in the fridge or freezer.

Alcohol

- Access to alcohol and/or drugs may result in difficulties managing physical distancing and other risk mitigation strategies.

Contact tracing

- Keep a record of guests who attend. This will ensure people can be contacted if someone attending your festive celebration tests positive for COVID-19.

Important consideration:

- The longer your gathering or event runs for, the greater the risk of guests having ‘close contact’ with each other (increasing their risk of COVID-19 transmission if a person attending tests positive for the virus).

Last updated 9 December 2020

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