



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Tip Sheet for Safer Social Interactions During COVID-19 Pandemic

Updated November 4, 2020

Updates from the July 13, 2020 version:

- Indoor restaurant dining is now open with reduced capacity.
- Clarifications to allowed outdoor gatherings:
 - As of 10/20/20, enjoy outdoor gatherings that are limited to a maximum of 25 people from a maximum of 3 households. The more restrictive of these two limits applies.
 - For an outdoor **meal** gathering, the number of people limit is stricter - 6 people. Sharing a meal with different households is higher risk, since masks cannot be worn while eating.
 - All gatherings should be 2 hours or less.
 - Organizing or coordinating groupings of gatherings at indoor or outdoor spaces at the same time is also prohibited ("simultaneous gatherings").
 - Street closures intended to revitalize economic activity (e.g. outdoor dining and outdoor personal services) should not turn into unauthorized street festivals, or freeform gatherings of people that pose substantial problems with compliance, enforcement, and accountability.
- **Note:** Indoor social gatherings with non-household members are still prohibited.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health cares about you and we want you to take care of yourself, your family, and your community with regard to COVID-19.

The best way to reduce the risk of getting or spreading the disease is to **STAY HOME**. At the same time, avoiding social isolation and supporting physical and mental health during a prolonged pandemic are also important for your health. As San Francisco moves to safer tiers for reopening, certain sectors are allowing indoor activities with restrictions, but indoor social gatherings are still not permitted. See more details in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-16c and No. 2020-19d at www.sfdph.org/directives.

Keep in mind while participating in allowed social interactions among people who are from different households, the more you expose yourself to different groups of people, the more likely you are to get exposed to the COVID-19 virus and spread it. Think of all the people you choose to interact with and all the people they're interacting with at home, work, school, and socially. We strongly encourage everyone to try not to interact with too many different people. To the extent possible, **keep the number of people and households you interact with small and stable**. Outdoor gatherings of **up to 3 households or up to 25 people, whichever is more restrictive**, are now permitted. For an outdoor meal gathering, the number of people **limit is stricter - 6 people**. Sharing a meal with different households is higher risk, since masks cannot be worn while eating. Indoor social gatherings with non-household members are still prohibited.



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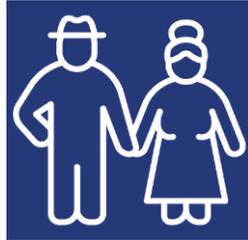
This tip sheet gives you information and resources to help you stay safe while also supporting your mental and physical well-being. Before having social interactions, assess the risks and benefits.

Assess Risk and Benefit



Your risk and the risk of those close to you

Think about yourself, those in your household, and those you work with. Is anyone over age 50 or have chronic medical conditions? See sfdcpc.org/vulnerable



The risk of who you are about to see

Take the most precautions possible for those who are over age 50 or have chronic medical conditions. See sfdcpc.org/vulnerable



The benefit of the interaction

How much does the social event mean to you?



How much COVID-19 is in the community?

Are cases decreasing, stable, or increasing? [San Francisco COVID-19 Data Tracker, data.sfgov.org](https://data.sfgov.org)

Risk of social interactions with people outside your household:

Outdoor, staying 6 feet apart with face covering on.	Outdoor, within 6 feet and/or with face covering off.	Indoor staying 6 feet apart with face covering on.	Indoor, within 6 feet and/or with face covering off.
Permitted. Group must be 25 people or fewer, or no more than three households, whichever is more restrictive.	Permitted for Meal Gatherings. Limit of 6 total people if meal involves those outside of your household.	Not permitted unless everyone is part of the same household.	Not permitted unless everyone is part of the same household.

Lower Risk

Higher Risk

Safer Social Interactions

Protecting your mental health and social wellbeing are important while trying to stick to sheltering in place. Some ways to do this include:



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- Connect with people by phone or virtually through FaceTime, Zoom, What's App, etc.
- Take advantage of outdoor activities while maintaining 6 feet of social distancing and wearing a face covering.

Safer Interactions

If you are feeling unwell or sick, stay home.

Make a plan on how to socially interact with these best practices in mind:

- Outdoor activities that maintain 6 feet of social distancing while wearing face masks are **safest**.
- **Keep your interaction to 2 hours or less.**
- The smaller the group and the fewer the households involved, the better. You may interact with up to **3 households or up to a total of 25 people, whichever is more restrictive.**
- Try not to interact with too many different people. **To the extent possible, keep the number of people and households you interact with small and stable.**
- Always wear a face covering when interacting with anyone outside your household.
- For an outdoor meal gathering, the number of people **limit is stricter - 6 people**. Sharing a meal with different households is higher risk, since masks cannot be worn while eating.
- Street closures intended to revitalize economic activity (e.g. outdoor dining and outdoor personal services) should not turn into unauthorized street festivals, or freeform gatherings of people that pose substantial problems with compliance, enforcement, and accountability.
- Organizing or coordinating groupings of gatherings at indoor or outdoor spaces at the same time is also prohibited ("simultaneous gatherings").
- Consider how you will get to and from a proposed interaction. Walking, biking, or driving in a single car would minimize your exposure to others. If using public transit, maintain 6 feet of distance from others to the extent possible, keep your face covering on, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer as soon as possible when you arrive.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you leave home and upon arrival to seeing someone outside your household.
- Try alternatives to shaking hands or other physical contact, like a wave, head nod, or welcome dance.
- Raised voices, such as when shouting and singing, should be avoided. Studies have shown that projecting your voice like when singing or shouting can spread more virus. Choral singing can be especially risky. For example, the Mount Vernon choir in Washington [had a COVID-19 outbreak](#) after a choir practice where 87% of the group developed COVID-19, resulting in two deaths. Consider listening to recorded music, having a live musician playing instruments, etc. in places of worship when they open.
- Do not share items including food, drinks, or utensils to the extent possible. Bring wipes to disinfect anything that might be shared.
- Do not share toys, bats, or balls or any objects that are passed back and forth to the extent possible. If



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unavoidable, use disinfection wipes, and wipe objects down between uses.

- Wash your hands immediately when you return home and wipe down your phone and keys.
- Try to remember who you interact with especially when you have higher risk exposures. Higher risk exposures are those where you were within 6 feet of someone outside your household for more than 15 minutes altogether (even if spread out in few minutes over 24 hours) or when either of your faces were not covered. This can help trace the spread of infection if you or someone you interact with contracts COVID-19. **To the extent possible, keep the number of people you have higher risk exposures to small and stable.**

General best practices:

- Wear face coverings at all times.
- Remember that outdoors is MUCH safer than indoors.
- Bring your own food for you and your household to the extent possible.
- Have dedicated utensils and glasses per person to the extent possible.
- Make a plan to avoid using others' bathrooms, if possible. If the bathroom must be used, have disinfecting wipes to wipe down handles, door knobs, sinks, etc.
- Keep **6 feet of distance**. Virus collects and concentrates indoors and can be spread indoors even over more than 6 feet of distance.
- If you are gathering indoors, face coverings should **always** be worn and make sure you are in a well-ventilated area, preferably with open windows.
- If enjoying an [indoor](#) meal at a restaurant, keep your face covering on whenever you are not actively eating and/or drinking.
- Minimize your time in higher risk activities. All gatherings should be **two hours or less**. The longer the duration, the greater the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Sanitize your hands upon arrival with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow while your face covering is on.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. If surfaces are dirty, clean them using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

[Skip the Flu! Get the Flu shot.](#)

Gatherings can contribute to the spread of other infectious diseases. Getting a [flu vaccine](#) is an essential part of protecting your health and your family's health this season. Flu vaccines are still useful any time during the flu season and can often be accessed into January or later. Click [this link](#) to find out where to get a flu shot in San Francisco.



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What To Do If You Feel Ill

Cover your face, test early, and trace!

If you have any **one** of the following symptoms that is new and not otherwise explained, get tested for COVID-19.

- Fever, Chills, or Repeated Shaking/ Shivering
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of Breath, Difficulty Breathing
- Feeling Unusually Weak or Fatigued
- New Loss of Taste or Smell
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Runny or congested nose
- Diarrhea

To get tested:

- Contact your healthcare provider; or
- Sign up for free testing at CityTestSF sf.gov/citytestsf; or
- If you live outside of San Francisco, you can check with the county where you live for other testing options.

Follow [Guidance for Isolation & Quarantine](https://www.sfgdp.org/Isolation-Quarantine-Packet) at www.sfgdp.org/Isolation-Quarantine-Packet.

Contact Tracing

What else can the community do to prevent COVID-19 transmission?

- One way we can all work together is to make sure people know when they may have been exposed. **“Contact tracing”** is critical to preventing further transmission of COVID-19. The San Francisco Department of Public Health, in partnership with our community, helps identify those who have had close contact with all people who have COVID-19. We do this whenever there is an outbreak of infectious diseases like measles, tuberculosis, and other diseases to protect the community’s health.
- People can transmit the virus 48 hours before they develop symptoms. Some people never develop symptoms and can still transmit the virus. **We can help prevent COVID-19 transmission by contact tracing which helps identify people who may have been exposed and helping them quarantine so they don’t unknowingly spread the disease.**
- If you take a test and the result is positive, a trained public health worker will reach out to you by phone or text. They check to see how you are doing, make sure you have what you need to isolate at home, and take a history of the places you’ve been and the people that you may been in contact with. This is why it is important for you to be mindful of who you interact with and to decrease the number of people with whom you interact.
 - **Cover your face, test early, and trace!** Find out more at <https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing/>



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Frequently Asked Questions

Does the SFDPH say we can leave our homes and have social interactions?

While sheltering in place is still the best way to protect yourself, your family, and your community, exposure to the outdoors is good for your health. When planning activities, you may want to plan a safe social interaction to help your mental health and reduce social isolation. As San Francisco moves to safer tiers for reopening, certain sectors are allowing indoor activities with restrictions, but indoor social gatherings are still not permitted. See more details in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-19d and No. 2020-16c at www.sfdph.org/directives.

Are we allowed to meet in our local park for a picnic and toss a Frisbee or football?

Parks are a great way to get exposure to the outdoors, which is good for your health. You can have a picnic with a friend or a very small and consistent group of friends by staying 6 feet apart and without sharing food or drinks. Outdoor gatherings of up to **3 households or up to a total of 25 people, whichever is more restrictive**, are permitted, as long as people remain 6 feet apart with face coverings on. Getting exercise is good. However, passing an object, like a Frisbee or football, back and forth is not safe during this pandemic. Maybe you and a friend might want to do something else - 6 feet apart but together. Dancing is a great way to exercise and blow off some stress.

My young children are going crazy and they need to have a playdate. How can we do one safely?

Although most children get no or mild symptoms when they have COVID-19, some children are at higher risk. For some families, children with health conditions or disabilities may be feeling an intense need for social interactions. Making decisions about risk can be complicated. If you decide to have social interactions outside your household, see the tips above. Outdoor playdates where the adults stay 6 feet apart with face coverings on are safest. Do not share food. To the extent possible, try not to share toys. To the extent possible, keep the children and households you interact with small and stable. If you do, sanitize hands before they play. After play, wipe down toys and sanitize hands before returning home. If you are feeling overwhelmed, reach out to others and let them know. The San Francisco Human Services Agency has a 24-hour crisis line for parents, [the TALK Line](http://theTALKLine.org), at (415) 441-5437. Learn more about resources at <https://www.sfhsa.org>.

I need to check on a grandparent and my young child won't/can't wear a mask. What can we do to have a safe visit?

Sheltering in place is very important for people in high risk groups, such as older adults over the age of 50. Isolation is also a serious issue for older adults. Consider all the different ways that you can check on someone safely first, such as more frequent phone calls or, if possible, virtual visits. If you feel like a wellness check or social visit is necessary, be particularly mindful of the tips above. Limit the number of people you interact with to limit your potential of inadvertently exposing the grandparent to COVID-19. Stay outside, 6 feet apart, and with face coverings on to the extent possible (for those older than 2). Encourage your children to stay 6 feet apart especially when interacting with higher risk groups. See www.sfdcp.org/vulnerable

I am over 50 and miss my grandkids who live nearby. What can I do?

See above. Family and meaningful connection are important to your health. Stay outside, 6 feet apart, and encourage others to keep their face coverings on to the extent possible. Wear your face covering as



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well. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently, particularly when contact with others or surfaces they have touched occurs inadvertently.

Can I host a socially distant birthday party outdoors?

When groups get together, the risks to everyone in the group goes up, as well as all the people that they work with and come in contact with. Consider a small outdoor get-together with other households you choose to interact with regularly, while remaining 6 feet apart and with face coverings. Outdoor gatherings without food or drinks, of up to **3 households or up to a total of 25 people, whichever is more restrictive**, are permitted as long as people remain 6 feet apart with face coverings on. Consider a “porch” party where the guests come by at different times to celebrate with you from 6 feet distance. Play music and blow kisses and wave and cheer another year of life!

Can I have a dinner party with friends at my house or in my backyard?

As mentioned above, indoor gatherings with people outside of your household are not permitted under the current Health Order. **If you choose to host an outdoor gathering where you will serve food and/or drink, the maximum number of attendees is 6, including host(s) and guests.**

Outdoor interactions are MUCH safer. Sharing food and utensils is a risk and a face covering cannot be worn while eating and drinking. To the extent possible, avoid sharing food, utensils, or other items. Bring your own food and dishware, stay outdoors and 6 feet apart with face coverings on as much as possible. Make a plan to avoid using others’ bathrooms, if possible. If the bathroom must be used have disinfecting wipes to wipe down handles, door knobs, sinks, etc.

Someone I met up with tested positive for COVID-19. We haven’t touched and have only met outdoors, what is the risk and what should I do next?

We are learning more about COVID-19 each week. At the current time, there is the least risk to outdoor, no-contact interactions where people are six feet apart at all times with their faces covered, and no food or objects are shared. If you think you spent more than 15 minutes altogether – even if it was only a minute or so each time - within 6 feet of that person, then you should quarantine for 14 days. See [Guidance for Isolation & Quarantine](http://www.sfdcp.org/Isolation-Quarantine-Packet) at www.sfdcp.org/Isolation-Quarantine-Packet. If you develop any symptoms of illness, call your healthcare provider, get tested and isolate according to the instructions in [Guidance for Isolation & Quarantine](http://www.sfdcp.org/Isolation-Quarantine-Packet) at www.sfdcp.org/Isolation-Quarantine-Packet.

What if I’m feeling a bit sick-ish but I’m not sure if it is really something or not - is it still okay to meet up outdoors with a friend or two?

If you feel at all unwell, stay home, for yourself and others. See “What To Do If You Feel Ill” above. Call your healthcare provider and get tested. Staying home when you might be sick saves lives.

It’s a beautiful day and my family is tired of going to the park to picnic. We’re planning to meet friends and their children for lunch at a restaurant. Is this allowed?

As of September 30, San Franciscans are now allowed to enjoy both indoor and outdoor dining at restaurants, with reduced capacity and other restrictions indoors. SFDPH strongly encourages that only individuals in the same household sit together. If you choose to dine with people outside of your household, try to do so with a small and stable group of friends/family members outside of your household.



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When people in different households get together, the risks to everyone in the group goes up. The risk is higher when people interact closer than 6 feet and are not wearing face coverings which would occur over a shared meal. Keep in mind no more than 6 people can be seated at a single table unless all members are of the same household. However, **members of different households should remain 6 feet apart and continue to wear their face covering** until seated at the table or any time you leave the table, such as to use the restroom. To the extent possible, avoid sharing food, utensils, or other items. Wash your hands or sanitize your hands upon arrival with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

How Does COVID-19 Spread?

Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing droplets in the breath of someone with COVID-19. These droplets enter the air when a person breathes. Even more droplets can get in the air when infected people talk, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 may have no symptoms and can still be breathing out virus-containing droplets that can infect others. Transmission can occur through:

- Larger droplets. These larger droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are pulled down by gravity. People nearby, usually within 6 feet, are infected when they breathe in these droplets or if the droplets land in their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Smaller droplets or infectious particles. These can float in the air for a period of time and/or travel beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. People sharing the same space are infected when they breathe in these smaller droplets and particles or the droplets or particles land on their eyes, nose, or mouth – even if they are further than 6 feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”.
- Touching a contaminated surface. COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite), however this is less common.

Prevention

- Avoid Close Contact. To the greatest extent, maintain at least six feet of social distancing between yourself and the people who don’t live in your Household. Remember that outdoors is MUCH safer than indoors.
- Wear a Face Covering. Cover your mouth and nose with a Face Covering in public settings and when around people who don’t live in your Household.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70 % isopropanol.
- Monitor Your Health Daily. Be alert of symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stay home.



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Resources

Useful COVID-19 resources to keep checking:

- [San Francisco Department of Public Health \(SFDPH\) COVID-19 Guidance: www.sfdcp.org/covid19](http://www.sfdcp.org/covid19)
- Tips and Frequently Asked Questions for Gatherings: <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/Gatherings-Tips.pdf>
- Dining During the COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/2020-16-Guidance-Dining-Bars.pdf>
- [City and County of San Francisco COVID-19 Information: sf.gov/coronavirus](http://sf.gov/coronavirus)
- [State of California Resilience Roadmap: https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap/](https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap/)
- [California Connected – Contact Tracing: https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing/](https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing/)
- [CDC Deciding to Go Out: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/activities.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/activities.html)