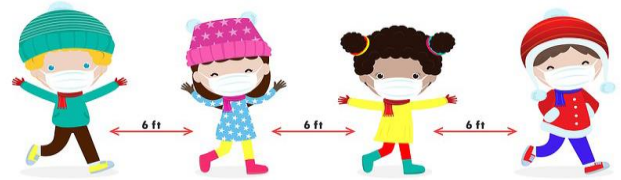


# Navigating December Holidays During Covid-19

building a stronger  
**You**

## Plan now for a safe, healthy holiday season

- **Consider staying home.** This may not be the year to see relatives, especially if the gathering would bring together loved ones who are older, or who might otherwise be at increased risk for complications.
- **Try not mix households.** This is the least risky way to celebrate this holiday season. When you have other people join your circle, it invites new opportunities for the virus to spread.
- **Entertain outdoors.** The outdoors is much safer than indoors for dining and socializing. If possible, eat earlier in the day when it's warmer. Consider using heat lamps or gathering around a backyard fire pit.
- **Indoor gathering.** If due to weather you need to gather indoors, increase ventilation. Open windows and doors to the extent that it is safe, or place central air and heating on continuous circulation.
- **Stay up to date.** When making plans, be sure to consider any state or local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations.
- **Follow the 3 W's.** *Wear a mask* unless eating or drinking. *Watch your distance*, staying at least 6 feet away from people who are not part of your immediate household. *Wash your hands* thoroughly and frequently. Check out the [CDC website](#) for coronavirus updates and more ideas on how to celebrate safely during this holiday season.



This has been a stressful year for kids and families. The holidays may be especially challenging because of changes to long held family traditions. Here are some ways to help your kids cope.

- **0-3 years old.** Focus on quality time during the holidays and don't worry about the details. It's okay to keep things simple. All children benefit from love and attention from parents.
- **4-6 years old.** Create new, quarantine approved holiday traditions within your immediate family: make homemade gifts and holiday decorations, cook a special meal. Try fun ways to have a video interaction, write letters or make cards. Tell them it's okay to feel sad, disappointed or angry.
- **7-12 years old.** At this age, children understand the precautions needed to be taken due to Covid. Validate their feelings of disappointment. *It's normal and OK to feel angry, frustrated or sad.* Ask them for their ideas about how to make the holiday special. Teach fun relaxation strategies: try [yoga](#) for the first time or practice [slow breathing exercises](#).
- **13-18 years old.** Ask teens how they are feeling. Let them know you are there if they need to talk. Listen! Often teens just want someone to listen and not solve problems for them. Offer perspective on the situation by looking at the big picture.

Source: [Connecticut Children.org](#).



## Make New Memories

The holidays may be different this year, but it doesn't mean they can't be special. Consider these low risk activities to help make this season memorable in new and creative ways.


- **Simplify.** Sending cards or notes of appreciation is an easy way to let loved ones know that you're thinking of them. Or send traditional gifts, such as Christmas cookies, chocolate coins wrapped in gold. Arrange to open cards and gifts together virtually via Zoom or FaceTime.
- **Make videos.** Consider recording holiday themed videos—your family singing carols, playing musical instruments, sharing a dance routine, or even doing stand-up comedy. Use your imagination and have fun.
- **Take an after-dinner walk.** After your holiday meal, go on a virtual group walk through your respective neighborhoods. Use your smart phone to feature interesting sights along the way.
- **Share a meal remotely.** Use a video platform like Zoom or Facetime to share a meal and good conversation with friends and family members. Plan ahead and set up a time that works for everyone.
- **Play games.** If you have a tradition of playing games, you can still do many activities remotely. Host an ugly sweater contest. Have someone pick a well-known holiday movie and have them give hints until someone guesses the title. [More ideas here.](#)
- **Consider volunteering.** Explore activities to honor the holiday, such as [virtual volunteering](#), a way to lend your time and support to those in need without leaving your house.


## Coping with holiday loneliness

It's common to feel lonely this time of year, even more so with stressors like physical distancing and Covid-19. If you normally celebrate with friends and family but won't be able to because of travel restrictions, here are some tips to help you feel more connected and minimize stress.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** If you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's okay to cry or express your feelings.
- **Plan ahead.** Don't wait until the actual holiday to make a plan. Come up with something you'll do on the day—bake cookies, order takeout, watch your favorite movie.
- **Reach out.** Maybe ask a friend to join you on a socially distanced coffee date, or invite a relative to share a glass of wine during a 15-minute Zoom call. Many community and religious organizations have online support groups, social media sites or virtual events that can offer companionship and support.
- **Get help if you need it.** If feelings of sadness or loneliness persist, or if you're feeling overwhelmed and stress is interfering with your everyday life, contacting the EAP may help.

For confidential support, free of charge, contact Caterpillar's **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**:

 **1-309-820-3604**

 **1-866-228-0565**

 **EAP.cat.com**

 **CaterpillarEAP.com**

For global access numbers by country

Source: [Concern EAP](#) and [University of Maryland](#)