



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Event and Activity Risks to Consider

Sterling, Colo. – July 28, 2020: Summer is in full swing and COVID-19 cases have been low for our six county health district. Over all, cases have decreased since the mid-May and for several days in June, we didn't have any new reported cases for several days. However, recently we are seeing an uptick in cases here in northeast Colorado and statewide, while neighboring states such as New Mexico, Arizona and Texas are experiencing very severe outbreaks. Nationally, case increases are attributed to young adults participating in risky behavior, while about 1/3 of new cases in our district are related to people traveling to attend funerals, weddings and other gatherings. So in order to keep our community safe and our local economy strong, we need to reverse this trend by continuing to be vigilant and smart about how and when we attend activities and events. Nevertheless, how do you measure the risks involved?

Imagine a volume knob. Each factor related to the event is like turning up the knob, some things only increase the risk by a few decibels, while others escalate exposure substantially. Aspects that increase the risk of exposure include events held at indoor locations with poor ventilation, large gatherings of attendees who are mainly from out of town/state or are strangers, sharing of items and close contact with people for periods of time over 10-15 minutes. Also, keep in mind that the more alcohol or cannabis available the more it can decrease inhibitions, which can increase the sorts of risks we take. On the other hand, events held in outdoor settings or in

spaces that allow for physical spacing between individuals as well as smaller gatherings have lower risk. Primary factors to consider in making your decisions about attending include:

- How many people does the activity involve?
- Is the activity inside or outside?
- Can you keep 6 feet between yourself and others?
- How long does the activity last?

Lower risk activities include camping with family members, visiting a vacation home or hotel, or participating in outdoor low contact exercises such as tennis or baseball. Shopping, dining out, playgrounds and swimming pools are all considered low to medium risk, but keep in mind the conditions associated with the activity. Medium to higher risk activities include airline travel, places of worship, personal services, bars, breweries, nightclubs, gyms, fitness facilities and singing with groups.

There is no way to ensure zero risk of infection. Interacting with the public will have some level of risk no matter what you are thinking of doing. Therefore, these are also really good things to consider when deciding whether to participate or when making travel plans:

- Is COVID-19 spreading in your destination community? Check COVID-19 case maps to find out the rate of infection in the area you want to travel. For instance, if you are planning to stay in your community and there are few cases, your risk of infection will be low. On the other hand, if you were thinking of flying to Houston, Texas to attend a wedding, the risk would be high. This [map from John Hopkins University](#) shows case count by counties which will provide you with targeted information. Having all the facts helps to decide whether to change plans or take extra precautions while visiting.
- What are the local orders in the community? Every state, county, city or town may have specific rules related to COVID-19. Be sure to check before you leave home.
- Do you or do people you live with have any [extra risk of serious illness](#) from COVID-19? Consider those factors when returning as you may have been exposed to the virus since

almost 40% of those who are contagious with COVID-19 are asymptomatic for the first 7-8 days but are still contagious. Exposure not only affects you but also those within your home since close contact is inevitable.

- How will you get there? Public transit can put you in close contact with others or traveling in cars with non-household members can also increase your risk, while a family traveling together in a personal vehicle would be less risky.
- If you get sick with COVID-19, will you be okay with missing work or school? This is a highly contagious virus. It's known to infect a whole room of people from just one infected person present. Be prepared to be out of work for at least 14 days, but possibly longer depending on the severity of symptoms.

It probably doesn't need to be said, but if you are sick or if possibly exposed to COVID-19, change plans and don't go. If you are healthy and decide to go, make it safer for yourself and others by maintaining physical distance of 6 feet, wash your hands frequently and wear a face covering if at all possible. Those three little acts of kindness: keep your space, cover your face, wash your hands, can help keep summer healthy for all of us.

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