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## Health officials urge Riverside County residents to keep holiday gatherings ‘Smaller, Shorter, Safer’

Riverside County residents are asked to take precautions when celebrating Thanksgiving with *smaller, shorter and safer* get-togethers.

With the recent rise in coronavirus cases and COVID-19 hospitalizations, state health officials are urging residents to limit possible exposure to the virus by reducing the number of people they have contact with during Thanksgiving.

While some may opt to have family gatherings, residents are urged to follow these recommendations:

**Smaller** – If you are going to meet during the holiday, keep the groups small and separate, even within a household. Avoid large gatherings.

**Shorter** – Keep get-togethers to an hour or two.

**Safer** – Don’t forget about basic safety: wear a mask, practice social distancing and wash your hands. Eat and socialize outside. Consider seating one family group on the patio, while another sits in a separate area. Keep plenty of hand sanitizer on hand. Avoid sharing serving utensils.

“We understand the desire to celebrate the holidays with loved ones, so consider these three steps that could help reduce the chance of virus spread if you decide to get together,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of the Riverside University Health System - Public Health. “Smaller, Shorter, Safer could really help slow the spread of the virus.”

Riverside County, like the rest of California, has seen a jump in cases, hospitalizations and the use of ICU beds over the last few weeks. The county was recently placed in the purple tier – the most restrictive of the four color-designated state tiers – as the case and positivity rates rose.

“Coronavirus is unfortunately rising rapidly in Riverside County, and around our state and nation,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “Let’s be careful and protect ourselves and our loved ones and follow these public health messages.”

State and federal health officials are providing similar guidance for the holidays. For California Department of Public Health, click <https://covid19.ca.gov/holidays/>

For guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) click <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/thanksgiving.html>

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