



NOV. 20, 2020



**BRUNSWICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER**  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
25 COURTHOUSE DRIVE (BUILDING A)  
BOLIVIA, NC 28422

**COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CALL LINE:** 910.253.2339

**COVID-19 EMAIL:** [CORONAVIRUS@BRUNSWICKCOUNTYNC.GOV](mailto:CORONAVIRUS@BRUNSWICKCOUNTYNC.GOV)

**COVID-19 WEBSITE:** [BRUNSWICKCOUNTYNC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS](http://BRUNSWICKCOUNTYNC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS)

Dear Brunswick County Residents,

Traditionally, the holidays are a time to gather with family and friends to celebrate and enjoy one another's company. However, such celebrations pose a risk to the health of you and your loved ones as the risk for COVID-19 transmission increases significantly when people gather—especially indoors.

We know this is true because we are seeing it first hand in our contact tracing efforts right here in Brunswick County. Our Health Services team has seen cases increase after all major holidays since this pandemic began—regularly involving family members from different households gathering together without using face coverings or practicing social distancing.

This holiday season, we urge you to avoid travel during Thanksgiving and only gather with people from your household as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), and Brunswick County Health Services have jointly advised. As it has been since the beginning of the pandemic, staying home remains the best way to prevent the spread or transmission of the virus.

If you do decide to travel or host a family or social gathering for Thanksgiving, we need you to follow the NCDHHS guidance when hosting or participating in any in-person gatherings. This is especially crucial if your gatherings include individuals over the age of 65 or who have underlying health conditions:

- The best way to reduce your risk of viral transmission is to limit travel during the holidays and limit physical contact with people who do not live in your household.
- Being related to someone does not mean you are immune from catching COVID-19 or other viruses from them. You should always practice the 3Ws and wear a face covering, keep 6 feet of social distancing, and wash your hands thoroughly—even when you are around family members.
- You should consider having a screening COVID-19 test prior to travel or attending family gatherings. If you do have a screening test, consider the following important information:
  - A negative test only gives you information for that point in time. A negative test does not mean you will remain negative at any time point after that test.
  - Screening tests may miss some infections, particularly if done using rapid or point of care tests.
  - Even if you have a negative test, you should wear a mask, physically distance, avoid crowds and indoor crowded places, wash your hands frequently, monitor yourself for symptoms, and minimize contact with people at high risk of complications of COVID-19.

If you have been recently diagnosed with COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have been around a person with COVID-19, then do not host or participate in any in-person gatherings until you complete your isolation or quarantine period.

The full Thanksgiving guidance from the NCDHHS is at <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Thanksgiving.pdf>

Find links to more information concerning testing in Brunswick County, answers to frequently asked questions, mental health resources, and how to receive the latest information on our Health Services COVID-19 webpage at [brunswickcountync.gov/coronavirus](http://brunswickcountync.gov/coronavirus)

We can stop the spread of this virus from impacting those we love most—but it will require all of us to step up to the plate and do our part. On behalf of the Brunswick County Health team, we need your help more than ever: ask all your family and friends to wear a face covering at Thanksgiving, follow the recommendations officials have issued, and stay home when you are sick.

Respectfully,

Health and Human Services Executive Director David Stanley

Health Services Director Cris Harrelson