

Survey finds most Americans will still use COVID precautions this holiday season

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A national survey by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center finds half of Americans will inquire about their guests' vaccination status before holiday gatherings. Experts say asking unvaccinated guests to wear masks helps keep everyone safe. Credit: The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

The 2020 holiday season was unlike any other as the risks of COVID-19 remained too high for families to safely celebrate together. A year later, precautions to slow the spread of the virus and, of course, the availability of vaccines paint a much brighter picture of what this holiday season will

look like. But while experts say those who are vaccinated can safely gather in small groups, a new national survey by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center finds many Americans are still very cautious when it comes to holiday parties.

The [survey](#) found about half of Americans will ask their guests to wear masks, down from 67% a year ago, and nearly three-fourths say they plan to only celebrate with members of their household.

"If everyone in attendance is vaccinated and are without major health risks, you can have a safe, small gathering without a lot of additional precautions," said Dr. Iahn Gonsenhauser, chief quality and patient safety officer at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and assistant professor of internal medicine at The Ohio State University College of Medicine. "Unvaccinated individuals really pose the greatest threat, and that's when it becomes necessary to put some rules and precautions in place, even though those conversations can be a little bit awkward."

According to the survey, that conversation is one many Americans are willing to have. Half of survey respondents say they'll ask about their guests' [vaccination status](#), and 46% will require unvaccinated guests to test negative for COVID-19 before attending the gathering.

"Plain and simple, vaccines work," Gonsenhauser said. "They're highly effective. The vaccines that we've seen developed for COVID are some of the most effective vaccines that we've ever seen in the history of medicine, there's no debate about that."

Experts recommend these tips for safe holiday gatherings this season:

- Wear masks

- Ask attendees their vaccination status before extending an invite
- Keep gatherings and celebrations small and to a minimum
- Consider celebrating only with those in your household or family
- For those with elevated [health risks](#), reconsider gatherings or ask the vaccination status of other guests

The survey asked more than 2,000 American adults 18 years of age and older various questions about their [holiday](#) celebration plans this year. Data was broken down by sex, age range and region of residence.

For those planning to travel for the holidays, it's recommended you check the latest information and guidance from the health department in the area you're visiting. COVID-19 precautions and mandates change quickly and vary by state, county and city. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also is recommended as a good resource for the latest health information and guidance.

Survey Method:

The 2021 survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center between October 29—November 1, 2021 among 2,042 US adults ages 18+. The 2020 survey was conducted from October 29- November 2, 2020 among 2,047 US adults. These online surveys are not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

Provided by Ohio State University Medical Center

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