

Fall/Winter 2022-23 Holidays: Test-giving edition

We'd all love to head into the holiday season without COVID on our minds. Holiday planning is hard enough! With news of a possible winter surge, it might feel like there's not a lot you can control. But here are a few suggestions to help keep Grandma (and other higher-risk family and friends) safer at Thanksgiving.

Watch for any new symptoms.

The most common reported symptoms from the Omicron variant have been sore throat, congestion (runny, stuffy nose), coughing, fatigue, headaches and muscle pain. If you develop these, take a test. Loss of taste and smell is less common than it was in the early stages of the pandemic, but if it happens, you should also take a COVID test. Review the [CDC's full list of symptoms](#).

If you're sick, stay home!

If you test positive, or don't test but have symptoms that seem like COVID, you should stay home to avoid getting anyone else sick. Think about arranging to join on ZOOM or Facetime if you feel well enough. Visit the [CDC's isolation calculator](#) for guidelines on isolating.

Find information about paid sick leave at [PDPH's COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Resources](#).



Get the updated booster.

There's still time to get the updated (Omicron) booster before Thanksgiving! The updated booster can help to ward off infection. And while it cannot account for every new variant, it's doing a spectacular job at containing the impacts of the Omicron B variants – the ones circulating right now. It reduces your chances of getting sick and, if you do get COVID-19, it can greatly reduce the number of days you'll be sick.



Test before you Turkey! Or Ham, Yam, or Tofurkey!

- * **Taking a test on Thanksgiving Day can help everyone get rid of some COVID anxiety.** If you have a stockpile of tests, test 48 hours prior to the party in addition to the day of.

19	20	21	22 Test 48 hours before Thanksgiving	23	24 Test Day of Thanksgiving
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- * **GET FREE AT-HOME Kits: No insurance or ID required! You can pick up free rapid antigen at-home test kits at five Health Department resource hubs.**

Location	Address	Hours
Bethany Baptist Church	5747 Warrington Ave., 19143	M, T, Th, & F: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm W: 11:00 am – 6:00 pm
Mi Salud Wellness Center	200 E. Wyoming Ave., 19120	M, W & Th: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm T: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm F: 8:30 am – 3:30 pm
Mt. Enon Baptist Church	500 Snyder Ave., 19148	T, W, F & S: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Th 11:00 am – 6:00 pm
The Shoppes at LaSalle,	5301 Chew Avenue, 19138	M, T, Th, & Sun: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm W: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Whitman Plaza	330 W. Oregon Ave., 19148	M through F 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

- * **Schools:** use [this form](#) to order tests or contact covid.schools@phila.gov
- * **Many major private insurance companies will reimburse you for tests.** Health insurance companies will reimburse for up to 8 tests per month for you and everyone covered under your plan. Go to your insurance company's website or call for more information on the reimbursement process.

Consider a mini-quarantine.

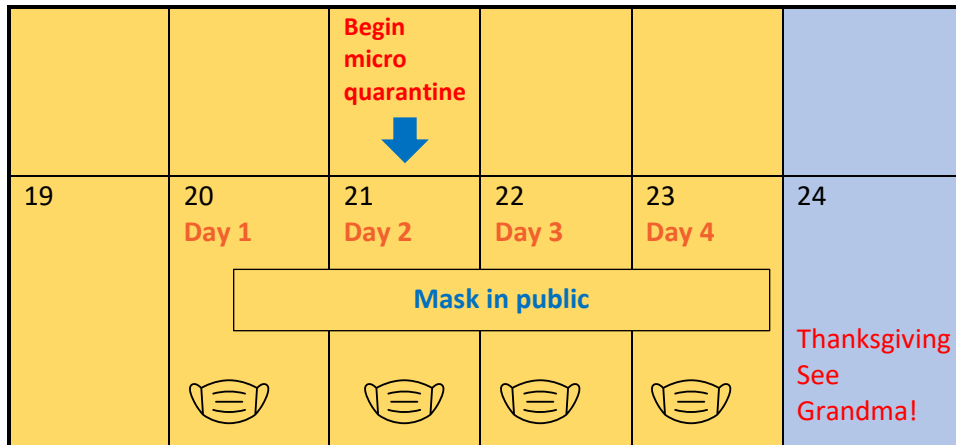
Think of it as a pre-holiday buffer -- a few days for Grandma. During mini-quarantine, don't spend time in crowded public places or go maskless 5 days before you get together. It's a little extra prep to protect those you love.



Mini-quarantine impossible? Try a micro-quarantine.

Since not everyone can take 5 days away from school, pre-school or work, consider a micro-quarantine instead. Before Thanksgiving, everyone (including kids) masks in public for 3 days. (Or 4 -- longer the better.) Not quite as safe as a mini- quarantine but combined with testing the micro-quarantine can still lower your most vulnerable loved one's risk!

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Ventilate your space.

This advice still holds true 2+ years into the pandemic. Outdoors is best. Heat lamps, fire-pits, and warm layers can help to make celebrations outside cozy and comfortable.



If that's not for your group, crack the windows, even a little keeps air circulating. HEPA filter can also help to trap some of the virus particles that could be in the air, making you safer.

Mask when you travel.

Keep a high-quality (K95 or KN95), well-fitted mask on when traveling. Long trip? Think about eating before you board.



You can also choose to wear a mask for part of the get-together. If you will be outdoors when you eat, but indoors for part of the holiday, put your mask on until dinner time. Remember masks also help to keep the RSV and flu viruses under control, too. Added bonus!

Resources:

[Learn more about home COVID-19 tests.](#)

Visit the [CDC's isolation calculator](#) for guidelines on isolating and exposure.

Questions? Call 215-685-5488

Visit: www.phila.gov/covid

Email: COVID@phila.gov