



HOW TO MINIMIZE COVID-19 Visiting Risks

The pandemic has affected us all. With Omicron BA.2 on the loose, it is best to meet in person only with the people you live with, or with a small pod that includes those you live with and a few others (the same ones all the time). If there is an occasion or event where it is necessary to meet with someone else, how can you, they, and those you live with stay safe? Here we share some advice to minimize risk for everyone.

Communicate.

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Communicate

Speak in advance with everyone invited about your concerns. Some measures need a bit of planning, so these should be discussed. Give special consideration to the protection of vulnerable family members and friends.

Travel Safety

If travel is involved, follow careful travel precautions to protect yourself and your fellow travelers. Limit social contact in advance of your trip. Wear a well-fitting high quality mask (N95, KN95, KF94, FFP2) and goggles or a face shield. Consider carrying a rechargeable HEPA purifier. If car sharing, ask that the driver also wear a mask and inquire about any symptoms in advance. Be sure that the ventilation system is not in recirculation mode. If weather permits, open windows slightly for ventilation. Use the restroom in advance and avoid using public shared facilities. Avoid touching high contact surfaces or use gloves. Have alcohol wipes and hand sanitizer within easy reach to sanitize luggage (especially handles) and your hands. Dine ahead of traveling to reduce eating and drinking while on the go. More detailed travel safety precautions can be found here: whn.global/guidelines/index.php/Travel

Air Quality

Ventilation is much easier in warmer places where windows can be left open or people can gather outdoors but air purification also considerably reduces the risk of transmitting Covid-19. There are many devices available on the market, use a kind that filters the air (true HEPA) but doesn't put out ions, chemicals, or UV light. If the device is only available with optional ionization or UV features, switch those off. Look for Honeywell, Levoit, Miko, Medify, IQAir, Afloia, Hathaspace, Coway, Intellipure, Cleanforce. As for opening the windows: choose a designated window opener, who reminds themselves to open the windows regularly using e.g., an alarm on their smartphone. A great interval is every 20 minutes. Ensuring good air quality is essential especially while eating and drinking, since face masks are removed.

Vaccinate

The available vaccines do not offer 100% protection, but they are highly effective. They will reduce the chances of getting infected, of infected people spreading the virus, and the potential severity of the disease. They protect you and others as well, so get fully vaccinated and get a booster if you are eligible. Full vaccination means that you have received 2 doses of the vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna, Astrazeneca or only one if Janssen) and the 14-day period since receiving the 2nd dose of the vaccine has passed. If you are eligible to receive a booster, do so in advance of traveling.

Contact

Reduce contact with others for as many days as possible up to two weeks.

No measure will prevent all possible exposures and infection transmission, so the more measures that you are able to layer up the better.

Test

Use PCR (better) or antigen tests, including ones that can be done at home as a way of reducing your risk of infecting others. Ask others to test to reduce your risk of being infected. Get tested even if you're vaccinated! All tests can produce false negatives, so results are not proof you are not infected. Doing multiple tests, a few days before and just before meeting helps but isn't perfect. Be extra careful to mask up at all times when indoors with others for 5-7 days before the event and testing during this time. Time testing early enough so if you get a positive result you can decide not to go. If you have symptoms, trust the symptoms more than the test, and stay home.

Short, few

Risks are reduced with fewer people physically at the same place (consider meeting with people nearer to you, and have a remote celebration with others who are farther away. This also minimizes the risks during air and other travel). The shorter the party, the lower the risk. And perhaps some meetings can be postponed. Prioritize those that are really relevant for you, and you can cut risks without missing out.

Mask

The virus that causes COVID-19 is airborne. Face masks are relatively cheap and, if worn properly, an extremely effective way to prevent transmission of infection. However, removing these during eating and drinking does increase the risk of transmission, making other measures even more important. Consider using high quality masks (N95, KN95, KF94, FFP2) as much as possible to reduce risk. Consider using a face shield in addition to a face mask for additional protection. For more detailed information about masks, refer to our in-depth guidelines: covidactiongroup.net/mask-fit-matters

Feeling

Feeling. If you are not feeling well— isolate and get tested. If you are experiencing symptoms but receive a negative test, trust the symptoms and isolate.

Return Safely

Plan in advance your return travel so you can follow careful travel precautions to protect yourself and your housemates. If car sharing, wear a mask and request that the driver does so too. Limit social contact upon arriving home from travel. Take a PCR and/or antigen test as soon as possible, and repeat the test that day and for a few consecutive days. If you are experiencing symptoms, it is best to isolate even in the absence of a positive test result. Consider using food delivery services to avoid grocery stores and quarantine for at least a week after returning from travel. Tests can indicate false negative results; it is therefore advisable to remain in quarantine for up to 14 days before resuming previous work and leisure activities with risk of exposing others. Confer with those you have visited and recommend the same practices to them to protect their communities from the risk of transmission. If one of those you visited begins to have symptoms or tests positive, follow quarantine guidelines to prevent further transmission.



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