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CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS DIFFERENTLY THIS YEAR *Public Health Advises Community to Stay Local and Avoid Gatherings*

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) –The fall and winter holidays are fast approaching and California is experiencing a sharp increase in cases statewide. Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary for the California Health and Human Services Agency reported today an increase in cases statewide of greater than 47% in the matter of one week from November 1, 2020 – November 7, 2020. Santa Barbara County has also seen significant increases in overall case rates. Thanksgiving is typically a time when many families travel to celebrate together. This year will have to be different.

The State of California has issued a [travel advisory and guidance](#) which indicates a recommendation that those traveling outside California practice self-quarantine upon their return. Travel and mixing households increase the chance of contracting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department does not recommend travel during the pandemic.

“Mixing households for holiday gatherings can be a very dangerous activity this year during the significant surge in COVID-19 cases we are currently experiencing nationwide. Please avoid gathering with people that do not live in your household and be diligent about wearing face coverings when you leave your home. These actions will save lives,” said Henning Ansorg M.D., Santa Barbara County Health Officer.

The current Santa Barbara County Health Officer Order does not allow for gatherings of any size, very limited exceptions apply. Visit our [local holiday guidance webpage](#) for information about lower-risk holiday activities. As you plan for your holiday, please take the following tips into consideration:

- Based on your plans, evaluate your risk for contracting the virus.
- Consider a virtual holiday meal where you connect with loved ones by video chat.
- Honestly assess any risks posed by various methods of travel, such as traveling on an airplane, train, or bus.
- Be open and transparent with family and friends about concerns, illnesses, and expectations.

For more information about staying safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit www.publichealthsb.org or call 2-1-1.

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Stay Connected:

County Public Health: www.PublicHealthSBC.org, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)
County of Santa Barbara: www.CountyofSB.org, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)
2-1-1 Call Center: Dial 211 or outside the area, call (800) 400-1572
Community Wellness Team Information and Referral Line: (805) 364-2750

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