



Hello One Church Family and Friends!

The holiday season is here, and we sure have a lot to be thankful for! The events of this year have given us many opportunities to reflect upon our blessings and appreciate the time that we have to spend with loved ones. And no other time of year seems more suitable for gathering together than Thanksgiving and Christmas. As you are making preparations to celebrate this year, the health ministry would like to share a few reminders with you.

COVID-19 is still a threat

At the top of the list this year is the fact that COVID-19 is still a real threat and this is especially true during this time of year when people are more likely to travel and spend more time indoors. Within the past week, SC DHEC has reported 11, 004 new COVID-19 state-wide cases. That's an average of around 1,500 new cases *DAILY*. The CDC anticipates that these numbers will continue to grow over the next few months.

If you are sick or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 **please stay at home** to recuperate and to keep your loved ones safe. Even if you have been blessed to remain COVID-free, think about having a stay at home celebration and include only the people that live in your house. To feel connected, consider planning a video chat with other family and friends. To help you plan, [click here for a few tips for creating a successful "Zooms-giving"](#). While you are home and "zooming" with family, hop online and go cyber-shopping this year to avoid crowded stores.

If you must travel, be it near or far, please be especially vigilant and continue to take all of the necessary precautions, such as:

- Keep a safe distance of at least 6 feet from others
- Wear a mask when around others even if you are outdoors, especially if you are unable to maintain a safe social distance
- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently. Use hand sanitizer if you are unable to wash your hands.
- Avoid large gatherings, especially with people you don't know
- Consider having dinner outdoors if weather permits
- Avoid crowded, stuffy indoor areas as much as possible. This includes stores for Black Friday and Christmas shopping.

Take precautions for at least 14 days after you return to protect others just in case you were exposed to COVID-19 and get tested if possible. Visit sclhec.gov/findatest or call 1-855-472-3432 to locate a COVID-19 testing near you.

Eat to live, don't live to eat

One of the things that people look forward to the most during the holidays, second to being together with friends and family, is the food! As you are feasting, remember that you should be eating to live and not living to eat. Have a plan for eating during the holidays and stick to it. Here are a few tips:

- Avoid the inclination to skip meals to "make room" for a large meal. This can make it more likely that you will overeat.
- Skip the toppings. Things like a dollop of whipped cream on top of pie or fudge on top of ice cream can quickly add unnecessary calories.
- Go slow at the dinner table to give your brain time to catch up to the fact that you are feeling full. If you just can't go without that second plate of food, wait at least 10 minutes before getting it.
- Special drinks often come with hefty calorie counts. A glass of wine or a mixed drink can set you back about 200 calories. Alcohol can also make it likely that you will eat more. *Remember to have a designated driver if you plan on consuming alcohol.*
- Be mindful of your portion size. Sure, Aunt Janice may make the best macaroni and cheese but that doesn't mean you have to eat half the pan. Questions about proper serving sizes? Visit myplate.gov for a guide to how much should actually be on your plate and to create a personalized meal plan.
- Cook with everyone's health in mind. Get creative with ways to add flavor to food without adding a lot of butter, lard, and salt.
- Keep moving. Plan a family walk or dance party before, after, or even between meals to burn calories. Do a little wobble after you gobble!

The health ministry wishes you and all of your loved ones a safe and healthy holiday season. Stay tuned for new and exciting events coming in the new year!