

Recommendations for Tribal Ceremonies and Gatherings During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Resource: [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Tribal ceremonies such as **sweat lodge, social gatherings and seasonal ceremonies**, and larger gatherings such as **pow wows and rodeos**, are a vital part of cultural identity and common and traditional practices in tribal communities. CDC offers the following recommendations to help tribal communities, elders, and leaders decide how best to keep their communities safe and work to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These considerations are meant to support—not replace—tribal laws, rules, and regulations aimed at protecting the health of tribal communities.

The more people who attend a ceremony or gathering, the closer they are to one another, and the longer they gather together, the higher the risk of spreading COVID-19. The [higher the level of community transmission](#) in the area that the gathering is being held, the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.

It is important to take steps now to protect tribal community members from getting sick before, during, and after participation in tribal ceremonies or other gatherings such as:

- sweats,
- birthday parties,
- pow wows,
- rodeos, and
- funerals.

This is especially true for tribal community members who may be at [higher risk](#), such as [tribal elders](#) and people with [underlying medical conditions](#).

What is done today, affects seven generations. The risk of COVID-19 spreading at events and gatherings including tribal seasonal ceremonies and gatherings increases as follows:

Lowest risk:

Tribal ceremonies or gatherings are conducted virtually (e.g., by communicating online, or by video conferencing or telephone), if traditions allow.

More risk:

Small in-person ceremonies or gatherings are held. Gatherings take place outside or in larger structures with good air flow. No food is served at ceremonies or gatherings. Tribal members remain at least 6 feet (or about 2 arms' lengths) away from others, wear masks, and do not share or touch the same items.

Higher risk:

Medium-sized in-person ceremonies or gatherings are adapted to allow tribal members to remain at least 6 feet apart. Tribal members are encouraged to wear masks. Food is served in pre-packaged boxes with disposable utensils.

Highest risk:

Large in-person ceremonies or gatherings are held where it is difficult for tribal members to remain at least 6 feet apart because of increased number of participants based on the venue size. Tribal members share or touch the same items. Food is served "potluck" or family style. Tribal members attending the ceremony or gathering come from multiple tribal communities or from outside the local geographic area.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you can't wash your hands with soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Stay at least 6 feet, or about 2 arm lengths, away from others.

Wear a [mask](#), especially when you are unable to stay 6 feet away from others.

Stay home if you are sick.