

Small Household Gatherings Are Driving COVID-19 Increase, CDC Says

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Editor's note: Find the latest COVID-19 news and guidance in Medscape's Coronavirus Resource Center.

Small gatherings in people's homes are becoming a larger source of coronavirus transmission, according to CNN.

Robert Redfield, the CDC director, talked about the latest trend during a call with governors on Tuesday. CNN obtained audio of the call.

"In the public square, we're seeing a higher degree of vigilance and mitigation steps in many jurisdictions," Redfield said. "But what we're seeing as the increasing threat right now is actually acquisition of infection through small household gatherings."

With Halloween, Thanksgiving and other holidays coming up, these gatherings could become a major concern.

"We think it's really important to stress the vigilance of these continued mitigation steps in the household setting," Redfield said.

The seven-day average for new U.S. coronavirus cases passed 51,000 on Tuesday, CNN reported, marking the first time in two months that the number crossed the 50,000 mark.

In addition, more than 36,000 COVID-19 patients were in hospitals across the country on Tuesday, the news outlet reported. That's the highest number since late August.

During the past week, Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, has given similar warnings about holiday gatherings.

"It's important for all of us to not let our guard down during Thanksgiving," she said during a media briefing on Friday. "We see that from the High Holy Days, people are just yearning to be together."

Again on Monday, Birx spoke to reporters after visiting locations in New Hampshire. She encouraged families to adapt their holidays plans and protect their vulnerable family members by wearing face masks and following social distancing guidelines, according to CBS Boston.

"This virus can spread among families and among friends if you take your mask off and are primarily indoors," she said. "When in private, we [need to take] the same precautions that we take in public."

Even still, Birx emphasized the importance of being "physically distanced and socially engaged." This could mean providing a safe space for vulnerable family members to sit and interact at a distance and wearing masks inside the house. When eating without masks on, family members may sit farther apart to prevent the spread of the virus.

"We know that [holidays] become transmission events and so we have to be careful both in public and in private," she said.

Sources:

CNN, "The US is seeing surge in Covid-19 cases. Small household gatherings are helping drive it, CDC chief says."

CBS Boston, " 'We Will Have To Adapt This Thanksgiving': Dr. Birx Says Remain Vigilant Against COVID-19."

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