

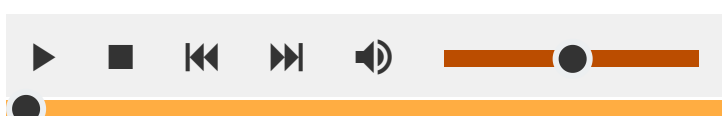
Transcript for CDC Telebriefing on the COVID-19 Outbreak

Press Briefing Transcript

Thursday, November 19, 2020

- [Audio recording](#)  [MP3 – 4 MB]

Please Note: This transcript is not edited and may contain errors.



[Transcript](#) » 

OPERATOR: IF YOU HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS TO THIS CALL BEING RECORDED, YOU MAY DISCONNECT AT THIS TIME. I WILL TURN THE CONFERENCE OVER TO MR. BENJAMIN HAYNES. THANK YOU. YOU MAY BEGIN.

HAYNES: THANK YOU, CHELSEA. **HAYNES:** THANK YOU, CHELSEA. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY FOR THIS BRIEFING TO DISCUSS SAFE WAYS TO ENJOY THE UPCOMING HOLIDAYS AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. TODAY, WE ARE JOINED BY DR. HENRY WALKER, THE INCIDENT MANAGER FOR CDC'S COVID-19 RESPONSE. HE IS THE CDC EXPERT CHARGED WITH OVERSEEING THE DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE AGENCY'S COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE ACTIVITIES. AND COMMANDER ERIN SAUBER-SCHATZ, THE COMMUNITY INTERVENTION AND CRITICAL POPULATION TASK FORCE LEADER AT CDC CHARGED WITH PREPARING THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO KEEP AMERICAN COMMUNITIES SAFE FROM COVID-19. DR. WALKER WILL PROVIDE OPENING REMARKS AND THEN BOTH WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS. THIS IS AN ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFING AND NOT UNDER EMBARGO. AT THIS TIME, I WILL TURN THE CALL OVER TO DR. WALKER.

WALKER: THANK YOU, BEN AND THANK ALL OF YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY.

AS A COUNTRY WE ARE SEEING INCREASES IN CASES, HOSPITALIZATIONS AND DEATHS BECAUSE OF COVID-19 AND WE KNOW THAT YOU ARE AS ALARMED AS WE ARE BY THE RAPID SPREAD OF COVID-19 ACROSS AMERICAN COMMUNITIES.

COVID-19 IS TURNING OUT TO BE A FORMIDABLE FOE.

WE MUST UNITE IN OUR EFFORTS AGAINST THIS VIRUS, AND NOW MORE THAN EVER, NOT LET DOWN OUR GUARD.

THERE IS SIMPLY NO MORE IMPORTANT TIME THAN NOW FOR EACH AND EVERY AMERICAN TO RE-DOUBLE OUR EFFORTS TO **WATCH OUR DISTANCE, WASH OUR HANDS AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WEAR A MASK**. MORE AND MORE SCIENTIFIC DATA IS SHOWING THAT MASKS CAN PROVIDE SOME PROTECTION TO THE WEARER. RIGHT NOW, THESE STEPS COMBINED ARE OUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES COVID-19.

WITH THANKSGIVING APPROACHING, OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TURN TO SEEING FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS PART OF ONE OF OUR NATION'S GREAT TRADITIONS AND WE ALL NEED TO CONSIDER THE SAFEST WAY TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY.

AMID THIS CRITICAL PHASE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, **CDC IS RECOMMENDING AGAINST TRAVEL DURING THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**.

FOR AMERICANS WHO DECIDE TO TRAVEL, CDC RECOMMENDS DOING SO AS SAFELY AS POSSIBLE BY FOLLOWING THE SAME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EVERYDAY LIVING DURING THIS PANDEMIC; WEAR A MASK IN PUBLIC SETTINGS AND ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, WATCH DISTANCE BY STAYING 6 FEET AWAY FROM OTHERS NOT FROM THE SAME HOUSEHOLD AND WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER OR HAND SANITIZER

HOUSEHOLD, AND WASH HANDS OFTEN WITH SOAP AND WATER OR HAND SANITIZER.

TODAY, CDC PUBLISHED UPDATED CONSIDERATIONS FOR THANKSGIVING AND WE ENCOURAGE ANYONE WHO WILL GATHER WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO CONSULT THOSE CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE THEIR FESTIVITIES.

THERE IS REASON FOR HOPE.

WE ARE ALL EXCITED ABOUT THE NEWS REGARDING A VACCINE, BUT IT'S NOT HERE YET.

WHEN IT DOES ARRIVE, THE MITIGATION STEPS WILL STILL BE EQUALLY IMPORTANT IN PROTECTING OURSELVES, OUR LOVED ONE AND OUR FELLOW CITIZENS.

WE KNOW THAT ENDING 2020 WITH A HOLIDAY SEASON SPENT MORE DISTANT THAN TOGETHER IS NOT WHAT WE ALL WANT. OUR HOPE IS THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS POSTED ONLINE TODAY CAN HELP PEOPLE CELEBRATE AS SAFELY AS POSSIBLE.

ALL AMERICANS WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILIES; EVEN, WHEN THERE ARE HARD DECISIONS TO BE MADE. WE ALL MUST DO OUR BEST TO PROTECT THOSE AROUND US.

THANK YOU. I NOW LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

HAYNES: THANK YOU, DR. WALKE. CHELSEA, WE'RE READY TO TAKE QUESTIONS.

OPERATOR: IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK A QUESTION, PLEASE PRESS STAR THEN 1, UNMUTE YOUR PHONE AND RECORD YOUR NAME, CLEARLY WHEN PROMPTED. ONE MOMENT WHILE WE WAIT ON OUR FIRST QUESTION. OUR FIRST QUESTION IS FROM STEPHANIE WITH ABC NEWS. YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

ABC NEWS: HEY. THANKS FOR HAVING THIS BRIEFING TODAY. I WANTED TO ASK ABOUT THE GUIDELINES IN GENERAL. YOU KNOW, WE KNOW THAT SOME PEOPLE ESPECIALLY AROUND THE RECENT HOLIDAYS HAVE ALREADY HAPPENED, HAVE NOT COMPLIED WITH ALL OF THE CDC OR LOCAL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS, YOU KNOW, DO YOU THINK THERE IS A NEED FOR SOMETHING MORE FORCEFUL OR A NATIONAL REQUIREMENT AS OPPOSED TO MORE GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS?

WALKE: YEAH. THANK YOU FOR THE QUESTION, STEPHANIE. I THINK THAT POLICIES AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL CAN HELP. WE'RE GOING TO BE RELEASING — WE HAVE RELEASED AN MMWR RELATED OR SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE USE OF STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES RELATED TO MASK USE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE RELEASED AN MMWR LOOKING AT ARIZONA IN THE PAST COUPLE MONTHS. AND AS THEY PUT IN THEIR LOCAL POLICIES RELATED TO USE OF MASK, YOU SAW A DECREASE IN CASES AS THOSE POLICIES WERE PUT IN EFFECT. SO, I DO THINK THAT THERE'S A ROLE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TO — FOR THE THREE WS TO WASH THEIR HANDS, WATCH THEIR DISTANCE AND WEAR A MASK AND ALSO TO AVOID LARGE GATHERINGS. BUT THERE'S ALSO A ROLE CERTAINLY FOR POLICYMAKERS AS WELL IN EMPHASIZING, HELPING, AND SUPPORTING THESE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: THE NEXT QUESTION IS FROM WILLIAM WAN "THE WASHINGTON POST." YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

WASHINGTON POST: THANKS SO MUCH FOR DOING THIS BRIEFING. I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU COULD TALK ABOUT THE REASON YOU'RE HOLDING THIS BRIEFING. IT'S BEEN MONTHS SINCE THE LAST ONE AND WHETHER THESE WILL BECOME A WEEKLY EVENT. AND IF NOT, WHY? IT SEEMS LIKE THIS IS A PARTICULARLY TOUGH PERIOD COMING UP FOR THE COUNTRY THAT MAY REQUIRE REGULAR BRIEFINGS FROM THE CDC?

WALKE: THANKS, WILLIAM. APPRECIATE THAT QUESTION. YES. WE'RE HAPPY TO DO THIS BRIEFING. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO COMMUNICATE WHAT WE'RE LEARNING AS WE GO FORWARD. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THESE BRIEFINGS ON A REGULAR BASIS, ESPECIALLY AS WE HAVE NEW GUIDANCE THAT COMES OUT. WE ARE IN A TOUGH TIME. HOSPITALIZATIONS AND DEATHS ARE INCREASING. AND SO, WE WANT TO SHARE AS MUCH AS WE CAN ABOUT WHAT WE'RE LEARNING AND TRY TO ACTUALLY HAVE YOU HELP US COMMUNICATE TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. SO, YES, THAT'S OUR INTENT.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: THE NEXT QUESTION IS FROM EVAN BROWN, FOX NEWS. YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

FOX NEWS: THANK YOU. GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE. COULD YOU GO INTO MORE ABOUT THIS RECOMMENDATION FOR NO TRAVEL? OBVIOUSLY THESE ARE RECOMMENDATIONS. WHAT DOES — WHAT HAPPENS FROM THERE? DO STATES DECIDE THERE COULD BE NO TRAVEL? OR IS IT A MATTER OF TRANSPORTATION REGULATION THAT WOULD IMPLEMENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS? HOW MUCH WEIGHT DOES THIS RECOMMENDATION ACTUALLY CARRY INTO PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS? BECAUSE WE ARE A WEEK AWAY FROM THANKSGIVING AND PEOPLE ARE MAKING PLANS.

WALKE: THANKS, EVAN. IT'S NOT A REQUIREMENT. IT'S A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TO CONSIDER. YOU KNOW, RIGHT NOW AS WE'RE SEEING EXPONENTIAL GROWTH IN CASES AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSLOCATE DISEASE OR INFECTION FROM ONE PART OF THE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER, LEADS TO OUR RECOMMENDATION TO AVOID TRAVEL AT THIS TIME. SO, VARIOUS STATES HAVE THEIR OWN REQUIREMENTS AROUND ENTRY INTO THIS STATE OR INTO A JURISDICTION. OUR GUIDANCE REALLY IS A RECOMMENDATION. IT'S A STRONG RECOMMENDATION. AND OUR GUIDANCE IS COMING OUT TODAY. WE ASK AMERICANS TO CONSIDER THEIR RISK, TO CONSIDER WHO IS IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD, THEIR INDIVIDUAL RISK OF ACQUIRING INFECTION, THEIR COMMUNITY RISK FROM THEIR OWN COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY WHICH THEY'RE TRAVELING TO, HOW THEY MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE INFECTION FROM ONE PLACE TO THE OTHER. SO OUR GUIDANCE REALLY HAS A SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IF PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL. IT'S NOT A REQUIREMENT. IT'S A STRONG RECOMMENDATION.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: THE NEXT QUESTION IS FROM ERIKA EDWARDS, NBC NEWS. YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

NBC NEWS: HEY, THANK YOU SO MUCH. I DID WANT TO FOLLOW UP ON WILLIAM'S QUESTION FROM EARLIER. I WAS ALSO CURIOUS WHY NOW? WHAT PROMPTED TODAY'S RECOMMENDATION AGAINST THANKSGIVING TRAVEL WHEN, YOU KNOW, MANY IN PUBLIC HEALTH HAVE BEEN WARNING ABOUT THIS SITUATION FOR WEEKS NOW. AND ADDITIONALLY, I'M CURIOUS WHETHER YOU HAVE ANY NEW GUIDANCE FOR THOSE WHO WILL GO AHEAD AND MAKE TRAVEL PLANS. IS THERE ANY NEW SCIENCE THAT YOU'RE LEARNING ABOUT IT, ABOUT ADDITIONAL MITIGATION EFFORTS THAT COULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE? THANK YOU.

WALKE: ALL RIGHT. I'LL START AND THEN HAVE THE COMMANDER ALSO SPEAK. I THINK WHY NOW THIS IS — WE'RE ALARMED. AGAIN, WITH THE EXPONENTIAL INCREASE IN CASES AND HOSPITALIZATIONS AND DEATHS, WE WANT TO GET OUT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND GET OUR COMMUNICATION MESSAGES OUT IN TERMS OF THE RISK INVOLVED. RELATED TO THE SCIENCE AND TRAVEL, IT CONTINUES TO EVOLVE. WHAT WE'RE CONCERNED ABOUT IS NOT ONLY THE ACTUAL MODE OF TRAVEL, WHETHER IT'S AN AIRPLANE OR A BUS OR A CAR OR AN RV, FOR EXAMPLE, BUT ALSO THE TRANSPORTATION HUB THAT WE'RE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT AS WELL. YOU KNOW, WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN LINES OR WAITING TO GET ON THE BUS OR GET ON THE PLANE, PEOPLE TEND TO CROWD TOGETHER AND CAN'T MAINTAIN THEIR DISTANCE. SO, THOSE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THIS TODAY. BUT, COMMANDER, WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD TO THAT?

SAUBER-SCHATZ: THE THING THAT I WOULD ADD IS THAT WITH OUR GUIDANCE THAT WE HAVE, WE HAVE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF. AS DR. WALKE SAID, IF YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD WILL BE VISITING SOMEONE WITH INCREASED RISK FOR GETTING VERY SICK FROM COVID-19, WE KNOW THROUGH OUR DATA AND STUDIES THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE HOSPITALIZED, NEED A VENTILATOR OR DIE. SO WE ARE REALLY ASKING PEOPLE TO BE FLEXIBLE IN THEIR PLANS FOR THANKSGIVING. IN THE LAST WEEK WE HAVE SEEN OVER A MILLION NEW CASES. THANKSGIVING IS A WEEK AWAY. SO IF YOU'RE SHOWING ANY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, WE ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDING THAT YOU DO NOT TRAVEL. BE FLEXIBLE AND MAKE THOSE DECISIONS MOVING FORWARD IN THE NEXT WEEK. ALSO, IF YOU'RE SUSPECTED OR DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19, YOU NEED TO STAY HOME AND QUARANTINE AND ISOLATE IF YOU'RE SICK. ALSO, IF YOU'VE BEEN AROUND SOMEONE WHO IS SUSPECTED OR DIAGNOSED COVID-19 IN THE PAST 14 DAYS, YOU ALSO NEED TO QUARANTINE. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT WEEK, PLEASE BE FLEXIBLE IN THE PLANS THAT YOU'RE MAKING. IF YOU ARE HOSTING OR ATTENDING A GATHERING, WE HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO MAKE THAT AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE. YOU CAN CELEBRATE OUTSIDE. SET THE EXPECTATIONS BEFORE PEOPLE COME SO THAT THEY KNOW THAT YOU ARE ASKING THEM TO WEAR A MASK OVER THEIR MOUTH AND NOSE UNLESS THEY'RE ACTIVELY EATING OR DRINKING. AND YOU CAN SET CHAIRS APART TO MAKE SURE THAT PEOPLE ARE SITTING SIX FEET AWAY. AND MAKE SURE PEOPLE ARE BRINGING HAND SANITIZER OR SUPPLY THAT SO THEY CAN WASH THEIR HANDS AS WELL.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: ANN WANG, NPR. YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

NPR: HI. THANKS FOR TAKING MY QUESTION. I WANTED TO ASK ABOUT THE REASONS BEHIND THE SEARCH. THE CDC DIRECTOR SAID THAT SMALL HOUSEHOLD GATHERINGS ARE DRIVING THE SURGE, BUT I WAS WONDERING IS THERE DATA AND EVIDENCE THAT SMALL HOUSEHOLD GATHERINGS ARE, IN FACT, DRIVING THE SURGE MORE THAN BARS AND RESTAURANTS AND SCHOOLS AND OTHER PLACES OF GATHERINGS?

WALKE: ANN. IT'S A GOOD QUESTION. AND FRANKLY IT'S A HARD ONE TO STUDY. IN TERMS OF THESE SMALL GATHERINGS. IT'S EASIER FOR US, OBVIOUSLY, TO LOOK AT LARGER EVENTS AND THEN TRACK THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE FROM THOSE. YOU KNOW, WE DO HAVE SOME — THERE'S A RECENT PAPER PUBLISHED THAT LOOKED AT BARS AND RESTAURANTS VERSUS CLOSING BARS AND RESTAURANTS VERSUS, YOU KNOW, LARGE SPORTS EVENTS, ET CETERA. I GUESS I WOULD SAY WE'RE TALKING TO OUR STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND OUR GOVERNORS AND WE'RE NOT SEEING — EVEN IN AREAS WHERE WE HAVE SORT OF DOUBLED DOWN ON REDUCING THESE LARGE EVENTS, WE'RE STILL SEEING SPREAD OF DISEASE. AND SOME OF THAT IS RELATED TO ASYMPTOMATIC NATURE OF TRANSMISSION. WE KNOW 30 TO 40% OF TRANSMISSION IS EITHER ASYMPTOMATIC OR MEANING NO PEOPLE WITH NO SYMPTOMS OR PRESYMPTOMATIC RIGHT BEFORE THEY DEVELOP SYMPTOMS. AND SO ONE OF OUR CONCERNS IS THAT PEOPLE OVER THE HOLIDAY SEASON GET TOGETHER AND THEY MAY ACTUALLY BE BRINGING INFECTION WITH THEM TO THAT SMALL GATHERING AND NOT KNOW IT. SO IT'S — WE'RE STILL LOOKING INTO THIS. WE'RE STILL STUDYING THE SORT OF OVERALL IMPACT OF SMALL GATHERINGS. BUT I WOULD SAY THAT BASED ON THE — WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ASYMPTOMATIC TRANSMISSION OR TRANSMISSION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT SYMPTOMS THAT WE'RE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE COMING TOGETHER SORT OF OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD BUBBLE. AND WE'VE SEEN THIS AFTER LABOR DAY, FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER MEMORIAL DAY. WE SAW THESE SPIKES IN CASES AND SO WE WANTED TO GET OUT NOW AND TALK ABOUT THE UPCOMING HOLIDAYS AND WARN PEOPLE TO BE SAFE.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: NEW YORK TIMES, YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

NY TIMES: HI, THANKS FOR TAKING MY QUESTIONS. YOU HAD SOME DOCUMENTS RELEASED EARLIER ON NOVEMBER 11th THAT ALSO HAD SOME OF THE SAME MATERIAL THAT YOU'RE COVERING IN THIS CALL ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO HOLD GATHERINGS. HOW WILL THESE NEW RECOMMENDATIONS THAT YOU'RE PUBLISHING TODAY BE DIFFERENT? AND WHERE EXACTLY WILL THE EMPHASIS CHANGE?

SAUBER-SCHATZ: HI, THIS IS COMMANDER ERIN SAUBER-SCHATZ. I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION. THE UPDATED CDC GUIDANCE WILL BE RELEASED AT NOON. THE REASON WE MADE THE UPDATE IS THE FACT THAT OVER THE LAST WEEK WE HAVE SEEN OVER A MILLION NEW CASES IN THE COUNTRY. SO THE PRIMARY CHANGES TO THE GUIDANCE ARE THE STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS TO NOT TRAVEL OVER THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY. THE OTHER CHANGE THAT WE MADE IS FURTHER DEFINING WHAT A HOUSEHOLD IS. WE RECEIVED LOTS OF QUESTIONS FROM AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT COLLEGE STUDENTS OR PEOPLE THAT WERE COMING HOME FROM THE HOLIDAYS. AND THEY'RE FAMILY MEMBERS OR THEY'RE HOUSEHOLD MEMBER. SO FURTHER CLARIFYING THE SAFEST THING TO CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING IS HOME WITH YOUR HOUSEHOLD. PEOPLE HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVELY LIVING WITH YOU FOR THE 14 DAYS BEFORE YOU'RE CELEBRATING, THEY'RE NOT CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD. AND THEREFORE YOU NEED TO TAKE THOSE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS. EVEN WEARING MASKS WITHIN YOUR OWN HOME.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

REPORTER: THANK YOU BOTH FOR HAVING TODAY'S PRESS BRIEFING. I REALLY APPRECIATE THIS AGAIN. I JUST WANTED TO ASK, WE'RE TALKING A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR PEOPLE. CAN YOU REALLY KIND OF DRIVE HOME BECAUSE IN SOME STATES WE'RE NOT FEELING IT AS MUCH AS OTHERS AS FAR AS THE TOLL OF THIS DISEASE. WHAT REALLY IS ON THE LINE FOR PEOPLE WHEN WE TALK ABOUT GETTING TOGETHER AT THANKSGIVING? SORT OF ON A FAMILY LEVEL. WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE BASED ON WHAT YOU'RE SEEING AND THE FORECAST OF WHAT WE'RE MOVING INTO RIGHT NOW.

WALKE: YEAH. THANK YOU FOR THE QUESTION. I THINK FROM AN INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLD LEVEL, WHAT'S AT STAKE IS BASICALLY THE INCREASED CHANCE OF ONE OF YOUR LOVED ONES BECOMING SICK AND BEING HOSPITALIZED AND DYING. AND AROUND THESE HOLIDAYS, WE TEND TO GET PEOPLE TOGETHER FROM MULTIPLE GENERATIONS. AND GRANDPARENTS, PARENTS, NIECES AND NEPHEWS ALL COME TOGETHER IN CELEBRATION. IT'S JUST WONDERFUL HAVING FAMILY COME TOGETHER IN THAT WAY. SOMEONE IS INFECTED IN THAT PARTICULAR HOUSEHOLD OR THAT LARGER FAMILY AND THEN SPREADS IT TO OTHERS. THEY BECOME INFECTED. AND THEN THEY GO BACK TO THEIR OWN

COMMUNITY AND THEN THAT INFECTION IS SPREAD TO SOMEONE ELSE. AND INADVERTENTLY IT COULD BE TO SOMEONE WHO HAS SERIOUS UNDERLYING DISEASE, DIABETES, OR SEVERE KIDNEY DISEASE, FOR EXAMPLE. AND THEN THAT PERSON COULD END UP BEING HOSPITALIZED. AND SO THE TRAGEDY THAT COULD HAPPEN IS ONE OF YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS FROM COMING TOGETHER AND FAMILY GATHERING COULD END UP BEING HOSPITALIZED AND SEVERELY ILL AND DYING. WE DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT HAPPEN. AND I THINK IT'S THESE TIMES ARE TOUGH. IT'S BEEN A LONG OUTBREAK, ALMOST 11 MONTHS NOW AND PEOPLE ARE TIRED. AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT. AND PEOPLE WANT TO SEE THEIR RELATIVES AND THEIR FRIENDS AND THE WAY THEY'VE ALWAYS DONE IT BUT THIS YEAR PARTICULARLY WE'RE ASKING PEOPLE TO BE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE AND LIMIT THEIR TRAVEL.

HAYNES: NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE.

OPERATOR: SAM WHITEHEAD, WABE, YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

WABE: HEY. THANK YOU ALL FOR DOING THIS. I WANT TO DIG INTO A LITTLE BIT ABOUT Y'ALL WERE KIND OF TALKING ABOUT COLLEGE STUDENTS COMING HOME. I MEAN, IS IT FAIR TO SAY THOSE STUDENTS SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF THEIR FAMILY'S HOUSEHOLD? AND THEN WHAT KIND OF SPECIFIC GUIDANCE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR WHAT THOSE STUDENTS SHOULD DO? SHOULD THEY THINK ABOUT REMAINING ON CAMPUS? OR IS IT JUST BEING EXTRA CAUTIOUS IF THEY DO DECIDE TO RETURN HOME?

SAUBER-SCHATZ: THIS IS ERIN. I CAN TAKE THAT QUESTION. SO WHOEVER HAS NOT LIVED IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD FOR THE 14 DAYS BEFORE YOUR CELEBRATION SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD. AND IN OUR GUIDANCE, WE DO HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERNIGHT GUESTS. SO FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS THAT ARE COMING HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS OR MILITARY FAMILY MEMBERS, REGARDLESS OF WHERE THEY'VE BEEN, IF THEY'RE COMING HOME AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN LIVING WITH YOU FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS, YOU DEFINITELY NEED TO TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS WITHIN YOUR HOUSE JUST TO HELP PREVENT STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19. OUR GUIDANCE DOES TALK ABOUT HAVING YOUR OWN BATHROOM FOR SOMEONE THAT MIGHT BE AN OVERNIGHT GUEST. SO THERE ARE VERY EASY THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP MAKE SURE THAT GATHERING IS AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE.

WALKE: YEAH. THIS IS HENRY. AS SOMEONE WHO HAS A COLLEGE STUDENT COMING BACK, ANOTHER THING YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IS TRYING TO HAVE YOUR COLLEGE STUDENT TWO WEEKS BEFORE THEY COME HOME IS TO BE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE AND LIMIT THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS. AND THEN WHEN THEY COME HOME, IF IT'S POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO DO MORE THINGS OUTSIDE THAN INSIDE, FOR EXAMPLE. AND ESPECIALLY EVEN TO THE POINT OF — IF YOU HAVE A PERSON WITH UNDERLYING CONDITION IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD, I WOULD CONSIDER A LOT OF VENTILATION AND WEARING MASKS ACTUALLY AROUND — WITHIN THE FAMILY, WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD ITSELF TO REDUCE THE RISK.

HAYNES: CHELSEA, WE HAVE TIME FOR TWO MORE QUESTIONS.

OPERATOR: MIKE STOBBE ASSOCIATED PRESS, YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

AP: HI. THANK YOU FOR TAKING MY QUESTION. I GUESS COMMANDER WAS CLEAR BUT I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT DEFINE TRAVEL. I CAN IMAGINE THERE'S FAMILIES IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, WHO MIGHT SAY WELL, MY GRANDPARENTS ARE IN THE BRONX. I'M NOT EVEN LEAVING THE CITY. THE CDC WOULDN'T MEAN THAT AS TRAVEL. BUT DOCTOR, I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY BUT THAT IS A TRAVEL. PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T BEEN IN MY HOUSEHOLD FOR 14 DAYS. I HAVE A SECOND QUESTION. BUT IS THAT CORRECT?

SAUBER-SCHATZ: SO EVEN IF THE COMMUNITY RISK IS THE SAME, SO AS YOU SAID, THE COMMUNITIES THEMSELVES MIGHT NOT BE THAT FAR APART. SO THE RISK OF ACTUALLY TRAVELING FROM HOUSEHOLD TO HOUSEHOLD, YOU MAYBE DON'T NEED TO STOP AT A GAS STATION, YOU WON'T BE MAKING ANY STOPS ALONG THE WAY, THAT PIECE MIGHT BE SMALL, BUT IT'S BRINGING TOGETHER THE MEMBERS OF THE SEPARATE HOUSEHOLDS WHERE THE RISK IS.

AP: OKAY. THANK YOU. AND I WANTED TO ASK, THE NEW RECOMMENDATIONS, DO THEY HAVE ANYTHING ELSE LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE, IF THERE IS A COLLEGE STUDENT OR SOMEBODY COMING HOME AND YOU'RE TAKING PRECAUTIONS, SHOULD ONLY ONE PERSON SERVE THE FOOD? ARE THERE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS, ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

SAUBER-SCHATZ: YES THAT GUIDANCE IS IN THERE. EXACTLY AS YOU SAID, WE HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON SERVING THE FOOD. WHEREVER FOOD MIGHT BE BEING PREPARED WHICH WE RECOMMEND LIMITING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT GO INTO THE KITCHEN, FOR INSTANCE. SO REALLY JUST TRYING TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT ARE HAVING SHARED OBJECTS AROUND FOOD.

HAYNES: LAST QUESTION, PLEASE, CHELSEA.

OPERATOR: ADAM, YOUR LINE IS NOW OPEN.

KHTV: YES. THANK YOU FOR DOING THE CALL AND FOR TAKING QUESTIONS. I WANTED TO KNOW IF YOUR CDC EXPERTS, HAVE ANY OF YOU HAD THESE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR OWN FAMILY MEMBERS? AND HOW DID THOSE CONVERSATIONS GO? HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO CONVINCE PEOPLE OF WHAT PEOPLE NEEDED TO DO TO CHANGE THIS THANKSGIVING TO MAKE IT SAFER.

WALKE: THANKS, ADAM, FOR THAT, THAT QUESTION. YES, IN TERMS OF MY OWN FAMILY. IT'S DIFFICULT. I HAVEN'T SEEN MY PARENTS IN — SINCE JANUARY. SO THEY'RE ASKING ME TO COME HOME. I KEEP SAYING, YOU SURE? I'M NOT SURE. AND SO I'M STAYING HOME. THAT'S BEEN DIFFICULT. I HAVE OLDER PARENTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE ME AND LOVE TO SEE MY CHILDREN AS WELL. SO, YES. MY OLDER KIDS ACTUALLY WHO ARE IN THEIR 20s OR IN COLLEGE, IT'S HAVING THAT CONVERSATION AROUND BEING SAFE, ESPECIALLY AROUND MY COLLEGE STUDENT BEFORE THEY COME HOME HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT ONE. SO, I THINK AS A HOUSEHOLD, AS FAMILY, WE CAN TALK TO EACH OTHER MORE FRANKLY AND BE A BIT MORE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT SOME OF THE EXPECTATIONS ARE. SO, I THINK IT'S A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION AND SOMETIMES A SAD ONE, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SEE YOUR LOVED ONES. CERTAINLY THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO COMMUNICATE. BUT EVERYBODY IS LEARNING THIS SORT OF VIDEO CHAT. BUT ANYWAYS, THANKS FOR YOUR — THANKS FOR THE QUESTION.

HAYNES: THANK YOU, DR. WALKE. THANK YOU, COMMANDER SAUBER-SCHATZ. THAT WILL CONCLUDE OUR BRIEFING. IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL OUR MAIN MEDIA LINE AT 404-639-3286 OR EMAIL MEDIA@CDC.GOV. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.

>> THIS CONCLUDES TODAY'S CONFERENCE. ALL PARTICIPANTS MAY DISCONNECT AT THIS TIME.

###

[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES](#) 

CDC works 24/7 protecting America's health, safety and security. Whether disease start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America's most pressing health threats. CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world.