



BHS Medical Department

Safe Outdoor Activities During COVID-19

Despite the changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and as it continues, it doesn't have to halt all of your outdoor fun. In fact, seeking out fun activities may be even more important now. Just getting together for a chat at a safe distance can offer a valuable opportunity to be with people you care about. Doing something you enjoy can distract you from problems, help you cope with life's challenges and boost your mood at the same time but remember it's important to take care of yourself and those around you.

- Plan activities that don't require close contact. In general, any activity that allows you to keep a social distance of at least 2 meters from others is lower risk.
- Avoid crowded sidewalks and narrow paths and choose routes that make it easy to keep your distance.
- Don't let cold weather stop you from being active outdoors! Dress in layers then head outside for a hike.

Why choose outdoor activities?

- When you're outside, fresh air is constantly moving, dispersing the respiratory droplets. So you're less likely to breathe in enough of the respiratory droplets containing the virus that causes COVID-19 to become infected.
- Being outside offers an emotional boost and can help you feel less tense, stressed, angry or depressed.
- Sunlight can give your body vitamin D.

Low risk outdoor activities

- Walking, running, hiking, rollerblading, biking, fitness classes held outside or virtually, that allow distance.

Low to moderate risk outdoor activities

Depending on how they're done, many popular outdoor activities can also be safe.

- Take advantage when the weather permits to be outside. Barbecues, campfires or a grill out on the patio can be good outdoor options. Keep your gathering small. Outdoor patio dining at uncrowded restaurants where patio tables are spaced appropriately is safer than indoor dining.
- Camping. If you only have close contact with people you live with, camping is low risk. If you camp with people who don't live in your household, camp in separate tents spaced at least 2 meters apart and avoid sharing camping supplies.
- Swimming pools and beaches. Close contact of less than 2 meters from others can make these activities risky. If you go to the beach and come into close contact with others, your risk is higher. Water itself doesn't spread the COVID-19 virus to people.
- Gathering with small groups of friends. When meeting outdoors in small groups, allow for social distancing between people from different households and skip the hugs and handshakes.
- Boating, canoeing, kayaking or rowing with people who don't live in your household is riskier than doing these activities with only those from your own household.

- Contact sports, such as wrestling and basketball, carry more COVID-19 risk than do other sports. Team sports such as tennis pose less risk because players can maintain physical distance. It's important for spectators, players and coaches to keep socially distanced.

High risk outdoor activities

- Being in large gatherings or crowds of people where it's difficult to stay spaced at least 2 meters apart poses the highest risk. The larger the group and the longer people are together in these situations, the higher the risk. Weddings, festivals and parades are examples.

- Youth camp activities. Camps can be generally high risk because campers come from different locations and spend a lot of time together indoors, in close contact. But camps can follow precautions to make them safer.

- Playgrounds. The many frequently touched surfaces of playground equipment make it easier to spread the virus that causes COVID-19.

Remember to practice precautions such as

- Washing your hands when you arrive and leave the gathering

- Not touching your face

- Wearing a mask

At the same time, well-being also includes doing things that make life worth living. You can make thoughtful choices about ways to bring a sense of normalcy and joy to your life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Think safety and enjoyment.

Ref: Mayo Clinic