



**-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-  
How to Celebrate the Holidays Safely During COVID-19**



**Anna Orlando, D.O., an internal medicine physician affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center's medical staff and SRMC Primary Care-Lisbon, outlined some ways to safely celebrate the holidays this year.**

---SALEM, OH (December 8, 2020)---Gathering with family and friends during the holiday season is a cherished tradition for many people. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some may wonder how to safely celebrate the holidays this year.

Anna Orlando, D.O., an internal medicine physician affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) medical staff and SRMC Primary Care-Lisbon, says that although the holidays might look different this year, it's still possible to have meaningful celebrations while keeping yourself and your loved ones safe.

"Like many things in 2020, the holidays will certainly be a challenging time as the pandemic continues," she said. "However, with some planning and creativity, there are ways you can celebrate the joy of the season and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19."

With virtual meetings being the norm now, Dr. Orlando shared how you can use this approach to see your loved ones while staying safe.

**Plan Virtual Gatherings**

"The more people you interact with when attending a gathering, the higher your risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and spreading the virus to others. The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19 is to limit your in-person celebrations to those who live in your home. Instead of hosting in-person gatherings with those living outside of your household, consider planning virtual get-togethers or gift exchanges. Online video apps like Zoom or FaceTime provide the ability for you to connect and be socially engaged with others while staying safe."

**Get Creative**

Dr. Orlando also shared how you can still implement those favorite holiday traditions and festivities while helping keep everyone healthy and safe.

“Some ideas include organizing a drive-by caroling event, hosting virtual tree trimming or cookie-making parties, or virtually watching a favorite holiday movie together,” she said.

If you’re looking for an alternative way to spread holiday cheer, Dr. Orlando recommends sending family Christmas cards or writing a letter to a friend you haven’t seen in a while. “Even something as simple as a phone call can go a long way toward feeling connected with others during the holidays,” she added.

Other fun and safe methods to celebrate the holidays this year include:

### **Share Holiday Recipes**

“Encourage loved ones to exchange recipes they’ve made or enjoyed at previous holiday get-togethers. Have everyone prepare a few new recipes on the day of their celebrations and then share their results virtually,” she said.

### **Take a Drive**

“Many communities and neighborhoods have festive holiday light displays that you can safely view from your vehicle. Hop in the car with your immediate family, turn on some festive music and take a drive around to enjoy the magic of the season,” she added.

### **Follow Basic Precautions**

Dr. Orlando advised that if you decide to get together with others during the holidays, it’s important to keep the gathering small (10 people or fewer) and for all guests to follow basic precautions for preventing the spread of illness.

These measures include:

- Wearing a mask
- Regularly washing hands and using hand sanitizer
- Staying 6 feet from one another when feasible
- Regularly disinfecting frequently touched surfaces

“If you are sick or currently isolating for a COVID-19 exposure, you should not participate in any in-person gatherings. Those who are at high risk for severe illness should also not attend,” she added.

Anna Orlando, D.O., Internal Medicine, sees patients ages 18 and older at SRMC Primary Care-Lisbon, located at 38506 Saltwell Road in Lisbon. Appointments with Dr. Orlando can be scheduled by calling 330-424-1404.

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