How Social Gatherings Spread COVID-19 – and How to Reduce Your Risk

COVID-19 is highly contagious. It is spread through indoor air and on infected surfaces.

Here are two common places where you could be infected, and how to reduce your risk.

**Family/Friends in a Living Room**
- 6 people are not wearing masks
- 4 hours together talking
- 5 will become infected
- 4 will become infected if masks are worn

**How to Reduce the Risk**
- Less than 1 person will be infected if:
  - 6 people wear masks
  - Stay at least 6 feet apart
  - Open windows in the room
  - Cut time together in half

**Bar or Restaurant at 50% Capacity**
- 15 patrons
- 3 employees
- No ventilation
- 14 customers will be infected after 4 hours
- If masks are worn, 8 customers will be infected

**How to Reduce the Risk**
- Less than 1 person will be infected if:
  - Run air conditioner
  - Reduce time in building
  - Maintain safe distance
  - Wear masks

**What Makes Indoors Good for Spreading the Coronavirus?**

Talking releases 50 times more virus-laden particles, called aerosols, than not speaking. These particles can affect people within about 16 feet in minutes. These aerosols, are smaller than dust particles and can hang in the air for hours. Because the aerosols...
become more concentrated over time, the longer you stay inside at a gathering, the more exposed you are to the virus if someone in the same place has it.

Remember that about 20% of people who have coronavirus infections do not have symptoms, so you really can’t tell who is safe to be around.

**Can Attending Indoor Gatherings Be Safe?**

Small gatherings can be less risky if they are held outdoor or ventilated with windows, and if attendees stay at least six feet apart, wear masks and don’t stay long.

Sources: [Covid Airborne Transmission Estimator](https://www.covid19airborne.com) and [El País](https://www.elpais.com)

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