

Sharing food during the holidays at HHS

November 26 2021

The holidays may look a little brighter this year compared to last, thanks to the gradual lift of remaining [public health restrictions](#), and with 83 per cent of all Hamiltonians and 95 per cent of Hamilton Health Sciences' (HHS) staff and physicians fully vaccinated.

However, we continue to recommend caution when gathering together within capacity limits. Full details about the [new guidelines for meetings and gatherings](#) are available on the Hub.

We can also now safely begin to loosen our stance on sharing food in designated spaces, as the concern is no longer about risk of cross-contamination from sharing food. Rather, the risk is with people being too close to one another, and unmasked, when they are eating.

Share food safely

It is acceptable for people to meet in person and share food that is not individually wrapped, including pizza, trays of sweets and potluck meals, providing the following measures are followed to ensure everyone's safety:

1. Gatherings where food is to be consumed must occur in designated break rooms and observe room capacity at 50 per cent, limiting the number of attendees accordingly.
2. Wear a mask when entering or exiting a room, and when getting up to move around the room.
3. Use designated seating; do not move furniture from its designated location within meeting rooms and do not bring-in additional seating.
4. Observe the guidelines for consuming food and beverage in designated break rooms; food and beverage is not permitted in meeting rooms.
5. Ensure that hand sanitizer is available to all within the room, especially when sharing serving utensils
6. Clean the space before leaving the room.

Note that when shared food is available at a central location, wear a mask when making your selection, then move away and maintain distance to eat. It is important to avoid gathering around food and drink while eating.

Additional reminders

1. Singing indoors is not permitted as it brings additional risk of transmission.
2. Eating and drinking by caregivers, support persons, and visitors is not allowed in patient rooms or on units.
3. Events such as outbreaks, as well as variations in the trajectory of the pandemic, may require changes to these guidelines during the coming weeks or months.

We appreciate everyone's continued efforts to ensure the safety and the wellbeing of their colleagues, patients and the communities we serve so that everyone can enjoy a safe holiday season.

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