

How risky are some common activities during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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Activities are rated with and without masks and social distancing

As all of us struggle to find our way amid a new normal, it's not unusual to wonder what's safe and what's not. Is it safe to eat at a restaurant? Is it risky to get a manicure? Can I go to the gym?

With so much information — and misinformation — available, sometimes it's hard to know.

Andrew Janowski, MD, a Washington University infectious disease specialist at St. Louis Children's Hospital, recently shared with [KSDK TV-5 On Your Side](#) the risk of being exposed to COVID-19 when participating in some common activities — with and without the use of masks and social distancing. As shown in the charts below — on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest risk and 10 the highest — the number of activities at the high-risk level dramatically decreases when social distancing and masks are used. Note that no activities are ranked in the lowest risk level when masks aren't used and social distancing isn't practiced.

The risk of COVID-19 in indoor settings, such as salons and gyms, can be decreased when masks are used, even if social distancing can't be maintained.

And although outdoor activities are generally considered safer than indoor activities, Dr. Janowski said there are still risks outdoors.

"In general, the risk level of an activity increases as you move from outdoor activities with participation of a few people — like camping — to outdoor activities where a crowd is expected, like a concert," Dr. Janowski said.



COVID-19 Risk Levels for Common Activities

WITH MOST PEOPLE WEARING MASKS AND PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING

Risk Levels 1-3

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ② Going camping | ② Two-night hotel stay |
| ② Restaurant takeout/curbside | ② Walk, run, or bike ride with others |
| ② Pumping gas | ③ Attending a backyard BBQ |
| ② Playing tennis | ③ Grocery shopping |
| ② Playing golf | ③ Going to a beach |

Risk Levels 4-6

- | | |
|---|--|
| ④ Going to a library or museum | ⑤ Sending kids to school, camp, or daycare |
| ④ Eating outside at a restaurant | ⑤ Attending a wedding or funeral |
| ④ Eating at someone else's house | ⑥ Traveling by airplane |
| ④ Shopping at a mall | ⑥ Eating inside at a restaurant |
| ④ Visiting elderly person at their home | ⑥ Going to a casino |
| ④ Sitting in doctor's waiting room | ⑥ Playing baseball |
| ⑤ One hour at a playground | ⑥ Going to a hair salon |
| ⑤ Working 1 week in an office building | ⑥ Working out at a gym |
| ⑤ Swimming in a public pool | ⑥ Going to a movie theater |
| ⑤ Going to an amusement park | |
| ⑤ Walking in a busy downtown area | |

Risk Levels 7-9

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| ⑦ Playing basketball | ⑦ Going to a bar |
| ⑦ Playing football | ⑦ Religious service w/ 100 worshippers |
| ⑦ Hugging or shaking hands | ⑧ Attending concert |
| ⑦ Playing soccer | ⑧ Going to a sports stadium |
| ⑦ Eating at a buffet | |

Risk Level 10

- ⑩ None

Dr. Janowski said the riskiest activities without a mask or social distancing include:

- going to a movie

- attending a church service with more than 100 people present
- going to a concert or an event at a sports stadium

And even the least risky activities — such as pumping gas or walking outdoors with others — have a risk level of at least 4 when no one is wearing a mask or practicing social distancing.



COVID-19 Risk Levels for Common Activities

WITH **NOBODY** WEARING MASKS OR PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING

Risk Levels 1-3

① None

Risk Levels 4-6

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ④ Going camping | ④ Playing golf |
| ④ Restaurant takeout/curbside | ④ Walk, run, or bike ride with others |
| ④ Pumping gas | ④ Two-night hotel stay |
| ④ Playing tennis | |

Risk Levels 7-9

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ⑦ Attending backyard BBQ | ⑧ Going to an amusement park |
| ⑦ Grocery shopping | ⑧ Walking in a busy downtown area |
| ⑦ Going to a library or museum | ⑧ Going to a casino |
| ⑦ Eating outside at a restaurant | ⑧ Playing baseball |
| ⑦ Eating at someone else's house | ⑧ Playing basketball |
| ⑦ Visiting elderly person in their home | ⑧ Playing football |
| ⑦ Sitting in a doctor's waiting room | ⑧ Hugging or shaking hands |
| ⑦ One hour at a playground | ⑧ Playing soccer |
| ⑦ Working 1 week in an office building | ⑨ Attending a wedding or funeral |
| ⑦ Sending kids to school, camp, or daycare | ⑨ Traveling by airplane |
| ⑧ Going to a beach | ⑨ Eating at a buffet |
| ⑧ Shopping at a mall | ⑨ Going to a hair salon |
| ⑧ Swimming in a public pool | ⑨ Working out at a gym |
| | ⑨ Going to a bar |

Risk Level 10

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| ⑩ Going at a movie theater | ⑩ Attending concert |
| ⑩ Religious service w/ 100 worshippers | ⑩ Going to a sports stadium |

In short, the keys to staying as safe as possible remain wearing masks, social distancing and practicing good hand hygiene any time you're in contact with people who live outside of your home.

"Until an effective vaccine is developed, our best weapons against COVID-19 are wearing masks and social distancing," Dr. Janowski said. "This is the new norm and will have to be part of our daily habits for the rest of 2020, and probably well into 2021."