



## UConn 4-H Best Practices for In-Person Activities During COVID-19

The health and safety of all 4-H members, volunteers, parents/guardians, guest, and staff is the top priority of the UConn 4-H Program. To help reduce the risks associated with the spread of COVID-19, the following guidelines from the State of Connecticut and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) shall be followed to protect yourself and others.

To help safeguard the health and safety of our members and volunteers, the following guidelines need to be followed for all 4-H meetings.

### **Before Your 4-H Meeting**

- **Email your County 4-H Educator to obtain current information on gathering restrictions.** As a state agency run program both UConn and State of CT guidelines must be adhered to at all times.
- Review the CT COVID website for current directives on gatherings.  
<https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Coronavirus-Business-Recovery/Sector-Rules-and-Certification-for-Reopen>
- Plan accordingly for attendees. Attendee limitations include everyone (volunteers, parents/guardians, members, siblings, guest speakers, etc.)
- Inform all possible participants to stay home if they have had known contact with anyone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days or if they are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone exhibiting the following symptoms should stay home:
  - Fever (100.4° F or higher) or feel feverish
  - Chills
  - A new or worsening cough not caused by another health condition
  - Sore throat
  - New or worsening difficulty breathing not caused by another health condition
  - New or worsening muscle aches not caused by another health condition
  - New or worsening headache that is not normal for them and not caused by another health condition
  - New loss of sense of taste or smell
- Inform all possible attendees to stay home if they are considered at high risk themselves or if they live or work with individuals at high risk. High risk individuals include those who are immunocompromised, or have other health factors identified by the CDC that increase risk if exposed to COVID-19 as well as those over 65 years of age.
- Have explicit information available before the meeting as to what will happen at the meeting such as: arrival protocols, information for parents/guardians, expected times of arrival and departure. All youth should have their own writing implements and should not share electronic devices, notebooks or other supplies.

- Disinfect all common, high touch surfaces as recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Adhering to product guidelines. Common, high touch surfaces include tables, counters, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, chairs, etc. These surfaces need to be wiped down before the meeting starts and after the meeting ends.
- Identify virtual strategies for engaging youth or volunteers who are at risk and not able to attend the event in-person.

#### **Preparing facilities for a 4-H meeting:**

- Ensure that the size of the room or facility is large enough to allow for the number of expected attendees and in accordance with current State Guidelines, this includes space to allow for social distancing.
- Space tables, chairs, etc. at least 6 ft. apart to ensure social distancing.
- Consider encouraging attendees to bring their own seating (camp chairs), if feasible..
- Disinfect all common, high touch surfaces as recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Common, high touch surfaces include tables, counters, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, chairs, etc. Follow product instructions for length of contact time, before wiping objects down.
- Ensure adequate ventilation or air handling equipment is available for indoor spaces. Keep windows/doors open where possible.

#### **When everyone arrives:**

- Have sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) available at the door for use upon arrival.
- Have a “check-in” process in place and follow it - include verifying or supplying proper PPE, and directions for where to wait until activity starts to ensure practicing social distancing (6 feet), wearing face masks, etc.
- Take attendance. Be sure to write down the names of EVERYONE that attended and the date. Do not share a pen or pencil. This includes members, parents/guardians, volunteers, staff, siblings, guest speakers, etc.
- Inform all participants to practice good hand hygiene by avoiding touching their face, mouth, nose and eyes, and covering coughs and sneezes.

#### **During the 4-H meeting:**

- All individuals present must wear a face mask, covering their nose and mouth.
- Maintain social distancing (6 feet) throughout the meeting or activity by households. You may need to be creative with different ice-breaker activities, roll-calls, etc.
- Ensure a protocol is in place and followed for use of any type of equipment. This may require planning for immediately disinfecting equipment between users. This process may involve adults, teens, or parents to engage in immediate sanitizing of equipment, etc. This is especially

important for shared equipment like electronic items, tools or cameras. Follow product instructions for length of contact time with disinfectant on surface, before wiping objects down. Request participants bring their own supplies (e.g. pens, cameras, etc.)

- Remind all attendees to wash hands/use hand sanitizer after using the restroom, sneezing, as well as before and after each activity.

#### **At the end of the 4-H meeting:**

- Ensure everyone washes their hands or uses hand sanitizer prior to leaving. Wipe down doors where clean hands may touch frequently.
- Have individual based activities ready for individual youth to do while awaiting their pick-up. These could be handouts, games, etc., that don't involve contact with each other.
- Disinfect all common, high touch surfaces with disinfectant as recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Common surfaces include tables, counters, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, chairs, etc. Follow product instructions for length of contact time, with disinfectant on surface before wiping objects down.

#### **Should you have food at your meeting?**

At this time we strongly recommend food or snacks **NOT** be provided as part of 4-H meetings. Require each member to bring their own snacks:

- Require all attendees to wash hands/use hand sanitizer prior to eating their snack.
- Have participants bring their own beverage container or snacks, as appropriate.
- Individual families may not bring homemade food or beverage items to the meeting for group consumption.
- Prepare individual "snack bags" or "bowls" ahead of time, with utensils for consuming.
- No self-serve food service/buffet is allowed.
- Paper cups, and any other paper product that touches food must be treated as food. Disposable plates, cups, and utensils are required and must be disposed of.

#### **Summary**

As a volunteer, your health and that of our youth members is of utmost importance and as such some engagement may be minimized at the request of a UConn employee or UConn 4-H volunteer based on health concerns associated with COVID-19.

By following the above best practices, we hope to offer more opportunities for youth to interact face-to-face within the parameters provided by the State of Connecticut and CDC. If you have any questions, please contact your UConn 4-H Educator for assistance or clarification.