

Transcription

Production Jennifer Johnson Address # 11
Episode Gather Safe, Gather Small
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Hi, I'm Skagit Public Health Director Jennifer Johnson. On June 5th, we moved into Phase 2 of the Safe Start—Reopening Washington plan. Being in Phase 2 means that you are allowed to gather with five or fewer people from outside your household per week. But let's talk about what those gatherings should look like in order for you to be safe, and to prevent spread of COVID-19.

First, the guidance is not five or fewer people per gathering- it's five or fewer people from outside your household per week. That means if you see four people on Sunday, you should only see one additional person total through the whole week. Why such a small number? If a person with COVID-19 were to infect 5 close contacts, this would be bad, especially as those five people may have four other contacts of their own. So that's about 25 people. And those 25 people could in turn infect others. If you increase that number to 10 people, suddenly 100 people are a risk and those 100 people could infect others as well! That is way too many people infected!

Second, if you're gathering with others, it is safer to stay outdoors than indoors. COVID-19 spreads through droplets released into the air when we cough, talk or sneeze. Good airflow disperses the droplets faster, making it less likely that transmission will occur. As much as you can- stay outside when visiting with people you don't live with.

Third, you must wear a mask at all times when visiting others. Well- okay. Not if you're actively eating or drinking something- but it's important that at all other times you keep your mask on. This can feel funny when its people we know really well, like our parents or extended family, and in a place where we're very comfortable. But masking significantly reduces the chance that infection will happen by preventing contagious droplets from getting into the air you're sharing. Please, wear a mask as much as possible.

Finally, wash or sanitize your hands as frequently as possible, and don't share food, drink or utensils. Bring your own food and drinks. This will help prevent the spread as well.

We all miss our friends and family, but being safe and slowing the spread of COVID-19 is crucial for our health, their health and the health of our community. Please, gather safe and gather small this summer- and slow the spread of COVID-19.