

Thanksgiving Health & Safety / Enjoy Break on Campus

Dear Students,

With Thanksgiving Break starting next week and concern over the significant increase of COVID cases in our state and across the nation, we would like to share some important health and safety information as you prepare to enjoy the holiday.

Enjoy StangsGiving on Campus through the Break

If you cannot or do not plan to travel, or are thinking of remaining on campus as a health precaution, the Residence Halls will be open the Thanksgiving Break, Thursday, Nov. 26-Sunday, Nov. 29.

You can enjoy a relaxing break on campus—including Thanksgiving Dinner, food service, and many planned activities—as part of our [Stevenson StangsGiving](#). For all three days of the break, food service is being provided to students living in the residence halls, and will include some special things such as wings and snacks you can take back to your room for Thanksgiving night football watching. The Thanksgiving Dinner and football snacks are offered free of charge.

Over the break, there will be virtual scavenger hunts with prizes, live online music, a Butterball Walk & Run course on campus if you need to burn off some post-Thanksgiving calories, plus some freebies and prizes. Please see the complete [StangsGiving calendar on the Portal](#).

Holiday Health & Safety Precautions

Public health authorities have been clear that many traditional holiday activities have been shown to result in increased cases of COVID transmission. So now more than ever it is important to consider, and if appropriate, modify your planned activities. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that the following types of activities pose a high risk for transmission of COVID and should be avoided:

- **Attending crowded dinners, parties, and large gatherings**
- **Attending indoor dinners or gatherings with anyone from outside your household, including extended family and friends who do not normally live in your household**
- **Shopping in crowded stores**

The CDC has also advised that students who have been away at college do not count as household members and need to maintain physical distancing and masking when they come home for holidays. Your household is anyone who currently lives and shares common spaces in your housing unit (such as your house, apartment, or suite). This can include family members, as well as roommates or people who are unrelated to you. College students who are returning home from school for the holidays should be considered part of different households than their families at home. In-person gatherings that bring together family members or friends from different households, including college students returning home, pose varying levels of risk.

If you are planning to go home, it is important to speak with your family and determine in advance what steps you and your family will take to be safe during the holidays. For more information, please see CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays/thanksgiving.html>.

The simple fact is that you should wear a mask, remain at least 6 feet from others whenever possible, and limit interactions to only those in your immediate household group. The more time you spend in large groups, even with masking and physical distancing, the risk of transmission can increase.

To stay safe over the Thanksgiving holiday, consider safer options such as sharing a small dinner with only those who live in your immediate household, connecting with family and friends virtually online, or shopping online instead of going to stores and malls. Remember to wear face coverings, maintain physical distancing of 6-feet or more, and avoid large gatherings. Visit the [CDC's Thanksgiving Safety Information page](#) for more helpful tips for staying healthy and safe during the holidays.

Out-of-State Travel Advisories

If you are heading out of Maryland for the break, you should check the COVID travel and health advisories for the states you are traveling to see how these could affect your timely return to campus after the break.

If you live in Maryland, state authorities are strongly advised against traveling to any state with a positivity rate above 10% or any state with average case rates above 20 per 100K. Anyone traveling from these states should get tested and self-quarantine while awaiting results. Marylanders are advised to postpone or cancel travel to these areas until their positivity and/or case rates decline.

Symptom Monitoring Over Break

During the break, all students, whether remaining on campus or traveling, should continue to use the [Student Symptom Tracker](#) and monitor for [possible COVID symptoms](#). Do not dismiss mild symptoms, as many cases are presenting only mild to moderate symptoms.

If you are symptomatic, remain home and do not return to campus, but contact the SU Wellness Center at 443-352-4200 or wellness@stevenson.edu for guidance about testing, isolation, and quarantining. If you receive a positive COVID test while you are away, please do not return to campus, even if asymptomatic. Rather, stay at home and notify the SU Wellness Center immediately for guidance about the isolation protocol and continuing your classes remotely while completing isolation at home.

Random Surveillance Testing After the Break

Given the rise in cases regionally as well as risks associated with holiday travel and gatherings, starting November 30, we will increase the number of students selected for weekly Random Surveillance Testing (RST). This testing remains an important tool among others for assessing and responding to possible COVID infections on campus, and we greatly appreciate students' participation in the RST program.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to keeping our campus community safe. We want you to enjoy your Thanksgiving Break safely to protect yourself and others so that everyone can successfully complete their Fall semester when they return. Use caution over the holidays and consider modifying your holiday plans or gatherings per CDC recommendations to help protect yourself and others from COVID transmission.

Stay safe and well, Mustangs!