

MEDICAL FAQS

From the ELCA Youth Gathering Logistics Team

What are the top medical concerns at the Gathering?



Dehydration

The average temperature in New Orleans in July is 92 degrees and groups will spend time outside walking to and from activities. To help your group stay hydrated we recommend:

- Carry a water bottle and fill it throughout the day.
- Drink before feeling thirsty. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already behind in fluid replacement. Dehydration is a primary contributor to heat exhaustion.
- Start drinking water in the morning. Being hydrated early makes it easier to stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Choose water over sugary drinks such as soda or energy drinks



Shoes

For those who are able, you'll likely be walking several miles each day. Wear footwear that can help prevent injuries and keep your feet comfortable. Choose shoes that provide good support and cushioning to reduce the strain on your feet and legs. Sneakers or walking shoes are usually a good choice. Break in the shoes prior to the gathering. Avoid shoes like flip flops, as they can break, cause discomfort and increase the risk of blisters or other foot problems.



Constipation

Constipation often happens when we travel. Constipation is one of biggest medical needs at the Gathering, likely because of disruption in routines, stress, sleep, and lack of privacy. We suggest staying hydrated and eating foods with a lot of fiber. Fruits like apples (with the skin), oranges, and bananas are packed with fiber and are easy to eat while you're on the move!

How can I best prepare my group to stay healthy at the Gathering?

The best time to prepare your group to stay healthy is before you leave for the Gathering. Review the above medical concerns with your group so everyone knows how to prevent common injuries. For those concerned about COVID, we recommend talking to a healthcare provider to ensure you are up to date on vaccinations and encourage participants to practice good hygiene/handwashing. Feel free to wear masks as they feel appropriate. We recommend that those who are sick before the Gathering seek medical care and test, as needed, to ensure everyone is set up for the best experience.

What happens if someone in my group gets sick?

If someone in your group gets sick or injured, you can call the InfoLine and reach our medical teams. All Gathering participants should make their leaders aware of any medical conditions. For illnesses such as COVID-19 that require isolation, there may be a limited number additional rooms available at the hotels at the Gathering room rate. Logistics Manager for Public Health, Ashley Smoots, will be available during the gathering events to consult with you/your group.

COVID-19 FAQ

These answers are up to date with current COVID-19 guidance and knowledge as of 1/20/2023. We recommend that all participants stay up to date with all vaccinations, including COVID-19, as able.

If you test positive for positive for COVID-19, the CDC currently recommends that you isolate and do not travel for at least 5 days following your positive test. A gathering participant testing positive for COVID-19 may face the following questions.

What should my roommates do?

Roommates of anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should start precautions immediately. This includes wearing a high-quality mask around others. Anyone developing symptoms should get tested and begin isolating if necessary.

Can I stay in my room?

Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should be isolated from others for at least 5 days. This will require a separate hotel room for those with the virus. To assist with this, there may be a limited number additional rooms available at the hotels at the Gathering room rate.

How do I get food?

We recommend that your youth group have a plan in case someone (youth or adult) gets sick during the event. This will require someone to bring food and any other necessities to the sick individual.

If I cannot travel for 5 days, who is staying with me? How are we paying to change our travel plans and/or for additional hotel nights?

We recommend that groups create contingency plans around what to do if someone is too sick to travel home in the event of COVID-19 or another illness. When planning your travel, consider an airline that has no change fees or purchase refundable tickets/travel insurance

Can the rest of my group keep participating in Gathering events?

Your group can continue attending the gathering if it is in line with COVID-19 guidance at the time of the event. Individuals exposed to COVID-19 are encouraged to wear high-quality masks when in public, including at Gathering events.