

Yom Kippur in Time of COVID-19

September 25, 2020, Friday

Yom Kippur, the culmination of the Jewish New Year and the holiest day of the year, will soon be observed, from sunset on Sunday, September 27, to nightfall on Monday, September 28. This is a solemn and sacred time to fast, reflect, and gather with family and friends. However, because we are still in the time of COVID-19, we must always be aware of safety and health concerns.

Whether you observe the High Holidays or not, this is a good opportunity to remember the essentials of COVID-19 prevention: masking, social distancing, and hand hygiene, as you gather to reflect or to break the fast.

The holiday of Sukkot—this year from Friday, October 2, to Friday, October 9—carries additional risks, as families and friends gather in the sukkah, or open-air booth, to share food and conversation. As with any gathering, there is potential for virus transmission if people sit too closely, especially while unmasked and eating. So we are recommending that sukkot not be constructed on Mount Sinai property this year, and that if you celebrate at a sukkah of your own or at your synagogue, please be mindful of social distancing and avoid crowds.

Here at Mount Sinai, our rule continues to be that all staff should wear a Mount Sinai-issued mask while in any of our facilities. That way, we keep each other, and our patients and visitors, safe.

We wish all who observe Yom Kippur a good fast and G'mar chatima tova—may you be sealed in the Book of Life.

Vicki R. LoPachin, MD, MBA
Senior Vice President
Chief Medical Officer
Mount Sinai Health System

Bernard Camins, MD, MSc
Medical Director, Infection Prevention
Mount Sinai Health System