Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Canceling or Postponing Travel

Should I cancel my trip?

CDC provides recommendations on postponing or canceling travel. These are called travel notices and are based on assessment of the potential health risks involved with traveling to a certain area. A list of destinations with travel notices is available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

Warning Level 3: CDC recommends travelers avoid all nonessential travel to destinations with level 3 travel notice because of the risk of getting COVID-19.

Alert Level 2: Because COVID-19 can be more serious in older adults and those with chronic medical conditions, people in these groups should talk to a healthcare provider and consider postponing travel to destinations with level 2 travel notices.

Watch Level 1: CDC does not recommend canceling or postponing travel to destinations with level 1 travel notices because the risk of COVID-19 is thought to be low. If you travel, take the following routine precautions:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
  - It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

Are layovers included in CDC's recommendation to avoid nonessential travel?

Yes. Layovers at airports in destinations with level 3 travel notices are included in CDC's recommendation to avoid nonessential travel. If a layover is unavoidable, CDC recommends that travelers not leave the airport. Travelers with layovers may still be subject to screening and monitoring when entering the United States.

I don't want to travel because of COVID-19. Can CDC help me get a refund from my airline or cruise line?

Each company establishes its own refund policies, and CDC cannot intervene to get them to change their policies. Some companies may base their policies on CDC's travel health notices. The decision to post or change the level of travel health notice is based on the best available science and takes into account numbers of cases, sustained spread, geographic spread of cases, risk to travelers, and other factors. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html

In some cases, trip cancellation insurance can protect your financial investment in a trip if you need to change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/insurance

Air or Cruise Travel

Is it safe to go on a cruise?

Cruises put large numbers of people, often from countries around the world, in frequent and close contact with each other. This can promote the spread of respiratory viruses, such as the virus that causes COVID-19. You may get sick from close contact with an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces.

To reduce spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, CDC recommends that crew members and passengers

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol.
- Stay in your cabin when you are sick and let the onboard medical center know immediately if you develop a fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher), begin to feel feverish, or have other symptoms (such as cough, runny nose, shortness breath, or sore throat).

What is the risk of getting COVID-19 on an airplane?

Because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on airplanes. Although the risk of infection on an airplane is low, travelers should try to avoid contact with sick passengers and wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contain 60%–95% alcohol.

For more information: Exposure Risk During Travel

What happens if there is a sick passenger on a flight?

Under current federal regulations, pilots must report to CDC all illnesses and deaths before arriving to the United States. If a sick traveler is considered to be a public health risk, CDC works with local and state health departments and international public health agencies to contact passengers and crew exposed to that sick traveler—according t CDC disease protocols.

Be sure to give the airline your current contact information when booking your ticket.

For more information: Contact Investigation

Returning from Travel

How are travelers from China being screened when they enter the United States?

At this time, American citizens, lawful permanent residents, and family members (as specified in the Presidential Proclamation) who have been in China in the past 14 days will be allowed to enter the United States. Those travelers will be directed to one of 11 US airports and will be screened for fever and symptoms and asked question about their travel in China and exposure. Those travelers will have some level of restriction on their movement depending on their health and travel history.

For more information: Travelers from China Arriving in the United States

What if I recently traveled to an area affected by COVID-19 and got sick?

If you were in a country with a COVID-19 outbreak and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, within 14 days after you left, you should

- Seek medical advice – Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel on public transportation while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus to others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Business Travel

After returning from China, when can employees return to work?

Currently, anyone who enters the United States after being in China during the past 14 days will have some level of restrictions on their movements.

- Travelers from Hubei Province will be quarantined and actively monitored in a location to be determined by public health authorities for up to 14 days.
- Travelers from other parts of China who do not have any symptoms are being asked to monitor their health and practice social distancing for 14 days.

Social distancing means remaining out of:

- Public places where close contact with others may occur (such as shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums).
- Workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows distancing from others).
- Schools and other classroom settings.
- Local public transportation (such as on a bus, subway, taxi, ride share, plane, ship)

These restrictions are to be in effect for 14 days from the time the person was possibly exposed.

For more information: Guidance for Businesses and Employers

Should businesses recommend facemasks or other protective equipment during travel?

CDC does not recommend travelers wear facemasks to protect themselves from COVID-19. You may choose to wear a mask, but it is more important that you take these steps.

We recommend that everyone follow everyday prevention practices:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning product.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol.