

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >



Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities

Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19

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Staying physically active is one of the best ways to keep your mind and body healthy. In many areas, people can visit parks, trails, campgrounds, and open spaces as a way to relieve stress, get some fresh air, and stay active.

While these facilities and areas can offer health benefits, it is important that you follow the steps below to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

DO

- ✓ Visit parks that are close to your home.
- ✓ Check with the park or recreation area in advance to prepare safely and to find out if the bathroom facilities are open and what services are available.
- ✓ Stay at least 6 feet away from others you don't live with ("social distancing") and take [other steps](#) to prevent COVID-19.
- ✓ Carefully consider use of playgrounds, and help children follow guidelines.
- ✓ Play it safe around and in [swimming pools](#), hot tubs, and water playgrounds by keeping space between yourself and others.

DON'T

- ✗ Visit parks if you are sick with, tested positive for COVID-19, or know you were recently exposed to COVID-19.
- ✗ Visit crowded parks or campgrounds.

Do's:



Do: Visit parks that are close to your home.

Traveling long distances to visit a park may contribute to the spread of COVID-19, as:

- Travel may require you to stop along the way or be in close contact with others with whom you may not otherwise have contact.
- Travel may also expose you to surfaces contaminated with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Consider postponing travel if you are at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of any age with underlying medical conditions), particularly to areas where there may be limited access to medical care.



Do: Check with the park or recreation area in advance to prepare safely.

National, State, or local parks

The federal or State and local authorities will decide whether parks and other recreational facilities will open. Check with the park in advance to be sure you know which areas or services are open, such as campgrounds, visitors' centers, bathroom facilities, laundry facilities, and concessions, and bring what you need with you, such as hand sanitizer or other supplies to maintain proper hygiene.

Beaches or other swimming areas

State and local authorities will decide whether swim areas at oceans, lakes, and other natural bodies of water will be open. Please check with individual beaches for specific details, including whether the water is open for swimming.



Do: Stay at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with and wear a mask as feasible.

When visiting parks, beaches, or recreational facilities open for public use, try to protect against exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, by practicing [social distancing](#) and [everyday preventive steps](#) such as washing hands often and covering coughs and sneezes.

Follow these actions when visiting a park, beach, or recreational facility:

- Stay at least 6 feet from others at all times. This might make some open areas, trails, and campsites better to use than others. Do not go into a crowded area.
- Avoid gathering with people you don't live with.
- Camp and hike with people in your household. If you choose to camp or hike with people outside your household, consider the following:
 - Camp in separate tents spaced out by at least 6 feet and avoid sharing camping supplies (including food and drinks).
 - There is no evidence that food or food packaging play a significant role in spreading the virus, but avoid sharing items such as serving utensils, multi-serving beverage containers, and condiment bottles with people outside your household.
- Wear a [mask](#) as feasible. Masks are **most** essential in times when social distancing is difficult, including when hiking on trails that may be popular or crowded.
 - Masks should **not** be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, can't move, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
 - Masks coverings should **not** be worn when engaging in activities where the mask might become wet, like when swimming.



Do: Clean hands often.

- [Wash 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.
 - Adults and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer: Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub hands together until dry, if soap and water are not readily available.
- Before camping, pack hand soap, hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) and supplies to clean and disinfect commonly-touched surfaces. Restroom facilities without running water, such as portable toilets and vault toilets, may not be stocked with hand hygiene products.
- Continue good hand hygiene practices after touching surfaces such as doors and handles, including those within bathroom and showers rooms, as well as water fountains or spigots, laundry facilities, ice machines, trash and recycling cans and bins, payment stations, vending machines, and other camping amenities. Here is more information on ways to [protect yourself and others](#).



Do: Carefully consider use of playgrounds, and help children follow guidelines.

In communities where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19, playgrounds can be hard to keep safe because:

- They are often crowded and could make social distancing difficult.
- It can be difficult to keep surfaces clean and disinfected.
- SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can spread when young children touch contaminated objects, and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.

If you choose to visit a playground:

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.
- **Wash hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Adults and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer: Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub hands together until dry, if soap and water are not readily available.
- Wear a mask, if you can. Masks should not be placed on:
 - Children under age 2.
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing.
 - Anyone who is unconscious, can't move, or is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.



Do: Play it safe around and in swimming pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds, and keep space between yourself and others.

Evidence suggests that COVID-19 cannot be spread to humans through most recreational water. Additionally, proper operation of these aquatic venues and disinfection of the water (with chlorine or bromine) should inactivate SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Swimming and other water-related activities are excellent ways to get the **physical activity** needed for a healthy life. Taking **steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19** is one way you can play it safe in and around swimming pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds.

- Don't visit a swimming pool if you are sick with, tested positive for, or were recently exposed to COVID-19.
- Practice **social distancing** by staying at least 6 feet (two meters) from people you don't live with.
- Keep your hands clean by **washing hands** with soap and water, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Adults and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer: Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub hands together until dry, if soap and water are not readily available.

Swimming does carry some health and safety risks. Visit **CDC's Healthy Swimming website** for information to help you prevent illness and **drowning**, so you can safely enjoy the fun and health benefits of swimming.

Don'ts:



Don't: Visit parks if you are sick with, tested positive for COVID-19, or were recently (within 14 days) exposed to COVID-19.

- If you are [sick](#) with or tested positive for COVID-19, were recently exposed (within 14 days) to someone with COVID-19, or just don't feel well, do not visit public areas including parks or recreational facilities.
- Follow [recommended steps to take if you are sick](#).



Don't: Visit crowded parks.

- Do not visit parks where you cannot stay at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.



For Administrators and Managers

- [Guidance for Park Administrators](#)
- [Considerations for Public Beaches](#)
- [Considerations for Aquatic Venues](#)

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), [Division of Viral Diseases](#)