

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >



Know Your Travel Risk

Updated Oct. 16, 2020

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Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Some travel activities, like the transportation you choose and where you stay, can increase your risk of getting COVID-19. Your chances of exposure are higher if you come into [close contact](#) with others, especially people you don't know, or use shared public facilities (like restrooms). COVID-19 is spreading in the [United States](#) and in [many international destinations](#). Visiting locations where there are fewer cases of COVID-19 may be less risky for getting COVID-19 than visiting locations where there are more cases of COVID-19.

Before you travel, learn which travel activities are lower risk to protect yourself and others. Keep in mind that getting from one place to another is just one piece of the travel risk. Your activities and who you interact with before, during, and after travel may increase your risk.

Transportation

Your chances of getting COVID-19 while traveling depend not only on the length of the trip and the number of stops, but also on whether you and those around you take precautions, such as wearing masks and staying at least 6 feet away from other people. Airports, bus stations, train stations, and rest stops are all places travelers can be exposed to the virus [through respiratory droplets or on surfaces](#). These are also places where it can be hard to [keep your distance](#). In general, the longer you are around a person with COVID-19 (even if they do not have symptoms), the more likely you are to get infected.

During car travel, making stops along the way for gas, food, or bathroom breaks can put you and your traveling companions in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. If traveling in a RV, you may have to stop less often for food or bathroom breaks, but you could still be in close contact with others while staying at RV parks overnight and while getting gas and supplies at public places.

Traveling on buses and trains for any length of time can involve sitting or standing within 6 feet of others, which may increase your risk of getting COVID-19. If you choose to travel by bus or train, learn what you can do to [protect yourself on public transportation](#).

Air travel requires spending time in security lines and airport terminals, which can bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes. However, keeping your distance is difficult on crowded flights, and sitting within 6 feet of others, sometimes for hours, may increase your risk of getting COVID-19.

Lowest Risk

- Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
- Short trips by car with members of your household with no stops along the way

More Risk

- Longer trips by car or RV with one or more stops along the way

Even More Risk

- Trips by car or RV with people who are not in your household
- Long-distance public transportation (e.g., train or bus)
- Direct flights

Highest Risk

- Flights with layovers
- Traveling on a cruise ship or river boat

If You Travel

During your trip, take steps to **protect yourself and others** from COVID-19:

- Wear a **mask** to keep your nose and mouth covered when in public settings.
- Avoid close contact by **staying at least 6 feet apart** (about 2 arms' length) from anyone who is not from your household.
- **Wash your hands** often or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

People You Are in Contact With During Travel

COVID-19 is **spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person**. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. The more closely you interact with others, the more people you interact with, and the longer those interactions, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. Therefore, doing things and spending time with people you live with is less risky than doing things and spending time with people not from your household.

Are you, someone you live with, or someone you plan on visiting at **increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19?**

Travel increases your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. Anyone can get very ill from the virus that causes COVID-19, but older adults and people with certain underlying medical conditions are at **increased risk for severe illness** from COVID-19. If you get infected while traveling, you can spread the virus to loved ones when you return, even if you don't have symptoms.

Lowest Risk

Interacting with household members only (indoors and outdoors)

More Risk

Interacting with a few people who are not from your household, if:

- All are from the local area
- You meet outdoors
- All wear a mask
- All stay at least 6 feet away from people they do not live with
- No one shares food, drinks or personal items with people they don't live with

Even More Risk

Interacting with a few people, if:

- People are from neighboring or other communities
- You meet in an open, well-ventilated indoor space
- Most (not all) wear a mask
- Most stay at least 6 feet away from people they do not live with
- Most limit sharing of food and personal items with others

Highest Risk

Interacting with crowds, especially if:

- People travel from distant communities or the crowd is made up of people from different places
- Spread of COVID-19 is high in the community
- You meet in a confined, poorly ventilated indoor space
- Few people wear a mask
- No one stays at least 6 feet away from people they do not live with
- People freely share food and personal items with others

Lodgings

Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Spending time with people you live with is less risky than doing things and spending time with people not from your household. When [traveling overnight](#), check your accommodations' COVID-19 prevention practices before you go.

Lowest Risk

- Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

More Risk

- A house or cabin with people from your household (e.g., vacation rentals)

Even More Risk

- Hotels or multi-unit guest lodgings (e.g., bed and breakfasts)
- Staying at a family member's or friend's home
- A house or cabin with people that are not in your household

Highest Risk

- Shared spaces with many people and shared bathroom facilities (e.g., dormitory-style hostels)

Food

The more closely you interact with others, the more people you interact with, and the longer those interactions, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. Your chances of getting COVID-19 while eating out also depend on whether you and those around you take steps to protect yourself and others, such as wearing masks and staying 6 feet away from people outside your household. Dining options that involve touching shared serving utensils, handles, buttons, or touchscreens also increase exposure risk. [Before dining at a restaurant](#), check the restaurant's COVID-19 prevention practices.

Lowest Risk

- Bringing your own food and drinks
- Using drive-thru, delivery, and curbside pick-up options
 - Wear a mask when interacting with restaurant employees

More Risk

- Picking up take-out food or drink inside of a restaurant
- Eating outside at a restaurant where:
 - Distancing at least 6 feet is possible
 - Servers and other restaurant staff wear masks
 - Diners wear masks when not eating or drinking
- Self-service options that minimize touching of surfaces, such as touchless drink dispensers

Even More Risk

- Eating inside at a restaurant where:
 - Dining area is well ventilated
 - Distancing at least 6 feet is possible
 - Servers and other restaurant staff wear masks
 - Diners wear masks when not eating or drinking
- Self-service options that require limited touching of surfaces, such as touch-screen drink dispensers or use of touchpads for ordering

Highest Risk

- Eating inside at a restaurant where:
 - Dining area is poorly ventilated
 - Distancing at least 6 feet is not possible
 - Where servers and restaurant staff do not wear masks
 - Diners do not wear masks
- Self-service options that require extensive touching of surfaces, such as buffets

Camping

The more closely you interact with others, the more people you interact with, and the longer those interactions, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. [When camping](#), it is important that you follow steps to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Lowest Risk

- Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

More Risk

- Camping with people from your household only and not sharing facilities with persons outside of your household
- All wear masks when interacting with people they do not live with

Even More Risk

- Camping with people from your household only, but sharing facilities with people outside of your household, where distancing at least 6 feet is possible
- Camping with friends or family who are not in your household and sharing tents or cabins with them
- Most (not all) wear a mask when interacting with people they do not live with

Highest Risk

- Camping in large dormitory-style settings with many people and shared facilities
- Few wear a mask when interacting with people they do not live with

After You Travel

You may have been exposed to COVID-19 on your travels. You may feel well and not have any symptoms, but you can be contagious without symptoms and spread the virus to others. You and your travel companions (including [children](#)) pose a risk to your family, friends, and community for 14 days after you were exposed to the virus. Regardless of where you traveled or what you did during your trip, take these actions to protect others from getting sick after you return:

- When around others, [stay at least 6 feet](#) (about 2 arms' length) from other people who are not from your household. It is important to do this everywhere, both indoors and outdoors.
- Wear a [mask](#) to keep your nose and mouth covered when you are outside of your home.
- [Wash your hands](#) often or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Watch your health and look for [symptoms of COVID-19](#). Take your temperature if you feel sick.

Follow [state](#), [territorial](#), [tribal](#) and local recommendations or requirements after travel.

Higher Risk Activities

If you participated in higher risk activities or think that you may have been exposed before or during your trip, take extra precautions (in addition the ones listed above) to protect others for 14 days after you arrive:

- [Stay home](#) as much as possible.
- Avoid being around people at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#).
- Consider getting [tested](#) for COVID-19.

Additional Resources:

- [Holiday Celebrations](#)
- [Visiting Beaches and Pools](#)
- [Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)
- [Attending Sporting Events](#)

Last Updated Oct. 16, 2020

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