# COVID-19 Guidance for Travelers

Indiana State Department of Health
Epidemiology Resource Center

## WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold. The risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk.

## HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or longer in a 24-hour period) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. The best way to protect yourself and to help reduce the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 is to limit your interactions with other people as much as possible and take precautions to prevent getting COVID-19 when you do interact with others. Those steps include wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance of 6 feet and washing your hands frequently. If you start feeling sick and think you may have COVID-19, get in touch with your healthcare provider within 24 hours.

## CRUISE SHIPS

COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred on several cruise ships. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all persons defer travel on cruise ships worldwide because of the increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. Deferring travel is especially important for older adults and people with serious chronic medical conditions (such as heart disease, diabetes or lung disease) because of their increased risk for severe illness.

**If you were on a cruise in the past 14 days:**

- Stay home for 14 days after disembarking except to get medical care.
- Monitor your health and practice social distancing, which means staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.

**If you become sick after returning:**

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and wash hands frequently.
- Notify your healthcare provider or local health department about your symptoms.
- Avoid public transportation.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home. This is known as home isolation.
- Limit contact with pets and animals.

**People who were recommended to home isolate due to exposure to or confirmation of COVID-19 can stop home isolation under the following conditions:**

- If you will not have a test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:
    - You have had no fever for at least 24 hours (no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers) AND
    - other symptoms have improved (for example, your cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND
    - at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared
- Seek medical care if you develop symptoms or the symptoms become worse, including difficulty breathing.
- Healthcare providers should immediately notify the local health department (https://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory) if a patient meets clinical and epidemiologic criteria for a person under investigation (PUI) (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html) for COVID-19 and test as appropriate.

## TRAVELING WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Cases of COVID-19 have been reported in all U.S. States. More information is available on the CDC COVID-19 Travel page. Crowded travel settings, like airports, may increase your risk of exposure to COVID-19.

## TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY

CDC recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential international travel. The CDC's COVID-19 travel recommendations by country is available here.

## TRAVELERS RETURNING FROM INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

There is widespread, ongoing transmission of novel coronavirus worldwide. If you have traveled internationally in the past 14 days, stay home and monitor your health. More information from the CDC is available here.

During this 14-day period, take these steps to monitor your health and practice social distancing:

- Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for cough or trouble breathing.
- Stay home and avoid contact with others.
- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.
- Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet).

## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANNING TRAVEL

Things to consider before travel:

- **Is COVID-19 spreading where you're going?** If COVID-19 is spreading at your destination, but not where you live, you may be at higher risk of exposure if you travel there.
- **Will you or your travel companion(s) be in close contact with others during your trip?** Risk of exposure to viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded settings, particularly closed-in settings with little air circulation.

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- **Are you or your travel companion(s) at higher risk of severe illness if you do get COVID-19?** CDC recommends that older adults and people of any age with serious chronic medical conditions (such as heart disease, lung disease or diabetes) avoid all cruise travel and nonessential air travel.
- **Do you have a plan for taking time off from work or school in case you get exposed to, or are sick with, COVID-19?** If you have close contact with someone with COVID-19 during travel, you may be asked to stay home to self-monitor and avoid contact with others for up to 14 days after travel. If you become sick with COVID-19, you may be unable to go to work or school until you're considered noninfectious.
- **Do you live with someone who is older or has a severe chronic health condition?** If you get sick with COVID-19 upon your return from travel, your household contacts may be at risk of infection.
- **Is COVID-19 spreading where you live?** Consider the risk of passing COVID-19 to others during travel.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General questions from the public or healthcare provider inquiries about COVID-19 may be directed to the ISDH COVID-19 Call Center at the toll-free number 877-826-0011 (available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

Additional information and resources can be found at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: https://coronavirus.in.gov
- CDC COVID-19 Travel webpage: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html