

Safe Family Fun This Summer: What to Know

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Warmer days typically bring reunions, vacations, parades and other time-honored activities. This year, as the country gradually reopens, the season likely won't look quite the same.

Fortunately, family fun can still fill your days. You might just have to alter your plans, take precautionary steps and stay flexible. Here's more on what to avoid and how to proceed.

Will There Be Concerts, Sporting Events or Festivals?

Many states are already lifting restrictions on gatherings. As case numbers slow, gradually larger gatherings may take place. While gatherings were once limited to 10 or fewer, you may soon see social settings of 50 people or more allowed.

However, when they do occur, events such as festivals, concerts and sporting events may look different. The number of attendees may be limited. And you may be asked to stay farther away from other attendees or take other precautionary steps, such as using hand sanitizer frequently or putting on a face mask and leaving immediately if you become sick.

These extra steps may feel strange at first. But not only will they help contain the spread of illness, they'll also reduce fear and anxiety as the pace of life picks up again.

Is It Safe to Go Swimming?

In some areas, beaches, parks and other public spaces are reopening for swimming, boating and other activities. Call or check online before you go for details.

Right now, there is no evidence that coronavirus spreads through the water, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) points out. In well-maintained pools, chemicals like chlorine and bromide kill most viruses.

Provided you aren't sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, you can enjoy the water. Just take basic precautions, such as staying 6 feet away from others and washing your hands frequently.

Wearing cloth face coverings, especially when you cannot maintain a distance of 6 feet from other people, can reduce the spread of the virus, the CDC notes.

Some local and state governments are requiring face coverings near beaches, in parks and in other public places. Make sure you check the rules and regulations in your area before packing up your beach basket or pool tote.

Can We Play Sports?

Organized games and leagues — think baseball, soccer and football — still aren't recommended. They typically involve close contact between people who don't live together, increasing the risk for viruses to spread.

In addition, while most cases of COVID-19 occur due to person-to-person contact, shared sports and fitness gear still poses a risk of spreading microbes. The same goes for playground equipment, the CDC says.

What About Summer Vacations?

Many families pack up the car, hop on planes or take cruises when school's out. This year, travel plans may need to be delayed or altered.

The CDC currently recommends avoiding international travel that isn't essential. Traveling within the country to visit family or friends may increase your risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.

Finally, the CDC also advises against taking cruises right now, as any virus can spread quickly among passengers and crew.

What Are Some Other Ideas for Safe Summer Activities?

Take this opportunity to explore parks and green spaces close to your home — places you might otherwise miss in favor of far-off destinations. Getting out in nature offers the chance for fresh air, vitamin D and stress relief. Just be sure to consider outdoor activities carefully and avoid contact sports, common public facilities and crowded public or private spaces.

In addition, try these ideas:

- Bike rides
- Gardening and lawn care
- Hiking trails
- Picnics (if you're headed to a public park or other facility, be sure to check whether picnic areas are open first)
- Pitching a tent in your backyard
- Small get-togethers where you stay 6 feet or more away from others

What's the Buzz on Summertime Bugs?

The CDC notes there's no evidence that coronavirus spreads through mosquitoes or ticks. So, while they may still be unwelcome guests at your backyard barbecue or trail outing, you don't need to fear getting COVID-19 from them.

Will Warm Weather Kill Off COVID-19?

Many viruses — such as influenza and other coronaviruses that cause common colds — spread less in summer, according to the CDC.

However, experts don't yet know if the same will be true of COVID-19. And, even if the virus does wane in summer months, it will still be possible to catch it and get sick. Exposing yourself to high temperatures alone doesn't kill the virus, according to the World Health Organization.

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