

Tips for Planning a Safe Summer Vacation

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Summer is traditionally a time for family vacations, whether it's a two-week trip abroad or a quick beach weekend. This year, however, many are rethinking their travel plans or reluctant to venture out at all.

While vacations are important to recharge the body, mind and spirit, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to urge [caution when traveling](#). If you do decide to venture out this summer, it's important to know how to minimize your risk as much as possible by following guidelines from the CDC to [protect yourself and your family](#).

Check What's Open

Since the rules about what can open — such as beaches, restaurants, campsites and parks — vary from state to state, you need to find out what's open and consider any restrictions in the area before planning your trip. For example, although many [national parks](#) are open, the National Park Service recommends checking the [individual park's website](#) before making any plans — including what specific facilities are open within the park.

If you're planning to travel to another state, you can check if there are any special restrictions in place at that state's [health department website](#). Before you make plans, you can also check the rates of coronavirus in the area using the [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#).

Steps for Safer Travel

While vacationing anywhere right now brings some level of risk, there are steps you can take to stay safe.

Ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask about cleaning and disinfecting practices at any hotels, inns or bed and breakfasts you're considering. You can also ask about occupancy rates and whether they are taking additional measures to keep guests safe.

Choose safer dining options. No matter where you stay, instead of dining at a restaurant, consider picking up food at a drive-through or curbside instead. If you have access to a kitchen or cooking area, purchase food and cook your own meals.

Find a rental. Instead of staying in a crowded hotel, look for a rental house that includes a kitchen and possibly your own pool. Bring your own food and prepare your meals. This will give you the chance to get away from home while reducing your exposure to other people and public areas.

Talk with the owner to make sure the house is properly [cleaned and disinfected](#) before you enter. To be extra safe, consider bringing your own supplies and cleaning upon your arrival.

Head away from the crowds. Instead of visiting a crowded beach or crowded national park, look for a more remote destination in the mountains or on a lake. Then bring your own supplies, food, books and games, and relax.

Stay safe around pools. According to the CDC, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread from the [water in public pools, hot tubs or water parks](#). However, if you choose to use these facilities, be safe by staying at least 6 feet away from people you aren't traveling with and wearing a mask when you're not in the water.

Getting to Your Destination

Any type of travel away from home can increase your chance of getting coronavirus. This is because traveling usually involves being in places where it's harder to social distance from other people. Each type of travel involves certain risks:

Bus or train: When traveling on a bus or train, it's often difficult to keep more than 6 feet away from others.

Car: Although you'll limit contact with others on your journey, if you need to make stops for food, gas or the restroom, you may come in contact with other people and with surfaces that are frequently touched by others.

Plane: Although germs don't spread easily on surfaces in [planes](#), you may need to sit less than 6 feet away from others for long periods of time. This may increase your risk for exposure to coronavirus.

RV: This type of travel involves fewer stops for food or the bathroom than a car, but you will still have to buy gas and possibly pick up supplies in public places. And if you stay at an RV park, you may be in close contact with other people.

Prepare for Your Trip

Whether you're taking a day trip or heading to another state for a week, be sure to pack these necessities:

- A bottle or two of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- A smaller bottle in your purse or bag for use when out in public places
- A cloth face covering for every member of your family older than age 2
- Disinfectant to clean the surfaces in a hotel room or rental
- Food, water and snacks in case stores and restaurants are closed
- Enough of your medicines — including any over-the-counter drugs — to last you for the length of your trip
- Toilet tissue, in case you can't find a public restroom that's open

Stay Safe During Your Trip

In addition to what we've covered, it's important to continue your general safety guidelines from the CDC:

- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Wear a [cloth face covering](#) in public

Consider an At-Home Vacation

Finally, if worry about travel is bringing more stress than the relaxation intended, get creative and plan a vacation at home. Although you might not be able to hike the Alps or dip your toes in the ocean, a vacation at home will keep you safer.

Here are some ideas:

Choose a place you'd like to visit — say the Southwest or the south of France — and create that experience at home. Decorate your home with images of the area. Prepare a meal that you would enjoy in that locale or find a local restaurant that specializes in that type of food and order takeout. Dine while listening to a soundtrack from that region, then take an online virtual tour of the area, visiting museums, natural parks or other local attractions. Or find a movie that takes place in that setting and enjoy.

Go camping. You don't need to travel far to have a camping experience. Set up a tent in your backyard, porch or even your living room and cook your favorite camp meals over an outside grill or camp stove. Tell stories outside under the stars, then tumble into your sleeping bag and listen to the sounds of nature — real or recorded — as you fall asleep.

Have a spa vacation. Turn your bathroom into a spa by lighting some candles and adding a bit of scented oil to your bath while listening to soothing music. If you're with a spouse or other family members, take turns giving each other a massage, facial or pedicure. Find a healthy spa menu online and make smoothies and healthy wraps. Then take a nature walk in a local park or relax to a gentle stretching class online.

Stay Informed, Healthy and Safe

To make sure you're taking the steps necessary to keep yourself healthy and safe, check in with your physician and follow recommendations from trusted sources such as the [CDC](#) and state health officials.

As always, we're here for you, too. If you need care, know that we've put [additional safety measures](#) into place at all of our facilities.

Some of our safety measures include:

- Separate treatment areas for patients with COVID-19 and/or symptoms
- Required use of face masks for every person in our facilities
- Social distancing to keep everyone 6 feet apart
- Visitor restrictions
- Temperature testing for all visitors at all entrances

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