COVID-19 and Cruise Ship Travel

Key Points

- ==CDC recommends travelers, particularly those with underlying health issues, defer all cruise ship travel worldwide.==
- Sustained community spread of respiratory illness caused by COVID-19 has been reported in many countries.
- ==Cruise ship passengers are at increased risk of person-to-person spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19.==
- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues should avoid situations that put them at increased risk for more severe disease. This entails avoiding crowded places, avoiding non-essential travel such as long plane trips, and especially avoiding embarking on cruise ships.

What is the current situation?

CDC typically posts travel health notices for countries and other international destinations, not conveyances, such as ships, airplanes, or trains. ==Because of the unusual nature of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the US government is advising US travelers, particularly those with underlying health issues, to defer cruise ship travel.==

==Recent reports of COVID-19 on cruise ships highlight the risk of infection to cruise ship passengers and crew. Like many other viruses, COVID-19 appears to spread more easily between people in close quarters aboard ships.==

Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 is occurring and countries are reporting both travel-related cases and community spread of the disease. As the outbreak of COVID-19 continues, there remains a risk of infected travelers and crew boarding cruise ships.

It has become clear that people with underlying conditions such as heart disease, chronic lung disease, diabetes, and other conditions that cause suppression of immune system particularly among the older adults, are at a high risk of serious disease if infected with the novel coronavirus.

To best protect these vulnerable individuals, we recommend that such individuals avoid situations that increase their risk of acquiring infections. This entails avoiding crowded places, avoiding non-essential travel such as long plane trips, and especially avoiding embarking on cruise ships.

==In addition, The U.S. Department of State recommends against cruise ship travel.== This is a dynamic situation and those traveling by ship may be impacted by travel restrictions affecting their itineraries or ability to disembark or may be subject to quarantine procedures implemented by the local authorities. While the U.S. government has successfully evacuated hundreds of our citizens in the previous weeks, repatriation flights should not be relied upon as an option for US citizens under the potential risk of quarantine by local authorities. U.S. citizens should evaluate the risks associated with choosing to remain in an area that may be subject to quarantine and take the appropriate proactive measures. Passengers who plan to travel by cruise ship should contact their cruise line companies directly for further information on the current rules and restrictions and continue to monitor the travel.state.gov website for updated information.

What can travelers do to protect themselves and others?

CDC recommends travelers, particularly those with underlying health issues, defer all cruise ship travel at this time. If you do travel by cruise ship during the COVID-19 outbreak:

- Older adults and travelers with underlying health issues should avoid situations that put them at increased risk for more severe disease. This entails avoiding crowded places, avoiding non-essential travel such as long plane trips, and especially avoiding embarking on cruise ships.
- Discuss cruise ship travel with your healthcare provider prior to travel.
- Avoid contact with sick people.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
  - It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Avoid traveling if you are sick.
- If you get sick with fever or new or worsening cough or difficulty breathing during your cruise, stay in your cabin and notify the onboard medical center immediately.

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

- Monitor your health and limit interactions with others for 14 days after returning to the United States.
  - If a case of COVID-19 was reported on your ship during the cruise, stay home during these 14 days and practice social distancing.
- Stay home if you feel sick with fever, cough, or have trouble breathing and call ahead before you seek medical care
- Seek medical advice. Call ahead before going to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Do not travel while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

For additional information

- About Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
- Novel Coronavirus Information for Travelers
- Information for Healthcare Professionals
- U.S. Department of State Cruise Ship Passengers
- Information for Cruise Ship Travelers
- Information about Managing COVID-19 on Cruise Ships