

How to Prevent the **Fear** of Coronavirus From Spreading

The latest strain of the coronavirus, COVID-19, has overtaken many of our news and social feeds for the last few weeks! This outbreak, originating in Wuhan, China, has impacted travel, economies, and peace of mind around the globe. Through this guide, we want to educate you on the current coronavirus situation and help you make an informed decision regarding travel.

We've gathered some grounding facts from authoritative sources, including Harvard University and the World Health Organization, about the coronavirus. Hopefully, this guide will help you think more clearly about COVID-19 and make more sound decisions regarding travel.

This ultimate guide on the coronavirus and travel will:

1. Answer your most asked questions regarding the coronavirus and travel
2. Provide authoritative resources you can reference for coronavirus updates

Should I cancel my trip due to the coronavirus?

It depends. Where are you traveling? Are you one of those who are most at risk for developing severe cases of the coronavirus? Are you concerned about a possible quarantine upon your return?

The coronavirus has caused travelers to question whether it's safe to take their pre-planned trip or even travel at all. The U.S. Department of State responded to the coronavirus outbreak by issuing a [Level 3 Global Health Advisory](#), which encourages citizens to reconsider international travel at this time. However, the CDC recommends nonessential travel to [China, Iran, South Korea, Malaysia, and European countries](#).

Individuals should consult [current travel advisories](#) for their intended destination and make an educated decision that's best for them. Those who decide to travel are encouraged to [enroll in STEP](#), which is a free service for traveling U.S. citizens. Enrolling your trip will make it easier to receive important information on safety conditions in your destination and help the U.S. Embassy reach you in case of an emergency.

1. Most Asked Questions Regarding the Coronavirus & Travel

Questions Regarding the Coronavirus

How does the coronavirus spread?

COVID-19 is not an air-borne disease. The coronavirus spreads through contaminated water droplets, which can manifest in coughs or sneezes from an infected person. To get the coronavirus, someone needs to inhale these small water droplets, which means you must be in close proximity to a sick person. To prevent the spreading of the coronavirus, the CDC provides [healthy guidelines for travelers](#) amidst the coronavirus.

How severe is the coronavirus, if contracted?

Most cases of the coronavirus result in mild, flu-like symptoms. The coronavirus most commonly starts with a fever and develops into a dry cough. Some cases can develop into more serious diseases like pneumonia and shortness of breath. However, only a fraction of [coronavirus cases have needed hospitalization](#) to aid in recovery.

Who is most at-risk for developing severe cases of the coronavirus?

Those [most at risk](#) for developing severe cases include older adults over sixty and those with pre-existing health conditions. Those with pre-existing conditions related to heart or respiratory diseases should take extra precautions.

How does COVID-19 compare to past outbreaks?

As of the latest update on March 3, 2020, WHO estimated the fatality rate of the coronavirus at 3.4%. However, using the [live map of the coronavirus situation](#) the fatality rate is about 4.1%. Regardless, these estimated fatality rates are much lower than previous outbreaks. According to the CDC, [SARS](#) in 2003 resulted in an estimated fatality rate of 10%, while [MERS](#) in 2012 resulted in an estimated fatality rate of 34%.

Should I wear a mask to protect myself against the coronavirus?

WHO recommends that those displaying respiratory symptoms of the coronavirus--coughing and sneezing--should wear a protective mask. However, they do not claim that wearing a mask will aid the unaffected to stay healthy. If you do wear a mask, you need to make sure it's the respirator kind and that it fits properly.

Is there a drug or vaccine for the coronavirus?

[There is no drug or vaccine](#) for the coronavirus yet. However, WHO declared [the first vaccine trial has begun](#) in a press release on March 18, 2020. WHO is actively working with researchers around the globe to share experimental therapeutics. This study is called the SOLIDARITY trial,

and its role is to evaluate treatment methods from participating countries to determine which are most effective in treating COVID-19. Similarly, the [CDC lists proactive measures to protect yourself](#) from the coronavirus, which include frequently washing your hands and avoiding close contact with sick persons. [Sick persons can prevent further contamination](#) by staying home, covering coughs, and wearing a facemask in public.

Questions Regarding Travel Amidst the Coronavirus

Are there current travel restrictions due to the coronavirus?

Due to widespread and ongoing transmission of the coronavirus, the [CDC has discouraged nonessential travel](#) to several countries, including most of Europe. The U.S. Department of State also issued a [Level 3 Global Health Advisory](#). The U.S. Homeland Security also released a [Presidential Proclamation](#) on March 11, 2020, that restricts the entry of foreign nationals from certain countries into the U.S. These areas currently include the Schengen Area. (The UK and Ireland were added to the suspension a few days later.) This global shift from these organizations currently discourages U.S. citizens from traveling abroad for the time being.

How are U.S. citizens affected by the travel restrictions?

U.S. citizens and their immediate families are [exempt from the travel restriction](#), meaning they can still return to the United States. However, they may become subject to a home quarantine upon their return. Other countries are also closing their borders to foreign nationals as the transmission of the coronavirus continues. Current travel advisories and press releases will provide the most updated information regarding further travel restrictions.

How likely am I to get the coronavirus if I'm traveling?

This largely depends on where you're traveling. The Department of State provides a thorough list of [travel advisories for each country](#), which should report if a country is restricted for travel or not. Check your destination for its travel warning, and you can make an educated decision to travel or not based on any travel warnings you may find. As stated, those most at risk for experiencing severe cases of the coronavirus include the elderly with pre-existing medical conditions.

Is there a greater risk of getting the coronavirus on an airplane?

WHO informs travelers that [plane cabins are NOT more dangerous](#) for contracting the coronavirus. Since the virus is not spread through the air, sitting on a plane with circulating air will not increase your risk of getting the coronavirus. You can always take precautions for guarding against sickness, including proactive hand washing and disinfecting surfaces.

Can I cancel my airfare due to the coronavirus?

Due to the coronavirus outbreak most airlines are offering changes and rebooking options for free. Some fares, if canceled, may receive a full refund from the airline, depending on the policies each one has in place.

Can I cancel my trip due to the coronavirus if I bought travel insurance?

It depends. Travel insurance providers generally exclude trip cancellation coverage for epidemics, an outbreak of a virus, or a travel advisory. The only circumstance where travel insurance could reimburse you for a portion of your lost trip cost would be if you purchased a specific type of coverage called "Cancel for Any Reason." To qualify for this benefit, you must have purchased your policy within 14-21 days from your initial deposit date and meet certain requirements.

What if I **need** to travel during the coronavirus?

The CDC implemented [Level 3 Travel Health Notices](#) for several countries: China, Iran, UK, Ireland, Iran, Malaysia, South Korea, and most of Europe. Similarly, the U.S. Department of State issued a Level 3 Global Health Advisory. Both organizations currently advise U.S. citizens to reconsider nonessential travel abroad at this time. However, U.S. citizens who are currently traveling may return to the U.S. despite current travel restrictions. Some may be required to home quarantine for a time period upon their return. Those who need to travel are highly encouraged to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive important travel alerts and make it easier to get contacted by the U.S. Embassy in case of an emergency.

2. Best Authoritative Sources for Coronavirus Updates

If you want to find the most accurate updates on the coronavirus, social media might not be the place to check. If you want to find trustworthy news on the coronavirus, consider turning to an authoritative source. Here are a few institutions that many people trust.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC gives a bold promise to America to protect our health, safety, and security around the clock. They provide a [three-tiered level system](#) to evaluate the risk of nonessential travel to certain destinations. Check out their resources if you're curious about the risk of the coronavirus associated with your travel destination.

Harvard Health Publishing

Harvard Health Publishing derives from the minds of over 10,000 highly educated physicians at Harvard Medical School. This trusted health news source released an [article about the coronavirus](#). The author warns against myths regarding the coronavirus, and encourages

readers to be cautious about sources on social media, where anything can get blown out of proportion.

John Hopkins Medicine

John Hopkins Medicine sets a standard of excellence by pushing the boundaries of scientific discovery and medical education. The director of infection prevention at Johns Hopkins [compares the coronavirus to influenza](#). Although onset symptoms can appear similar, they are caused by entirely different viruses.

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO directs and coordinates international health within the United Nations system to project people into a better and healthier future across the globe. WHO released a video about [common questions regarding the coronavirus and travel](#).

Final Thoughts on the Coronavirus

Make sure you know the facts regarding the coronavirus and travel before you make a hasty decision. Know who's most at risk and which areas have the most confirmed cases. Due to current travel restrictions over the coronavirus, you will want to be cautious regarding travel to your intended destination. Research the location you're heading to, and always, be safe.

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Sources:

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