

Holiday Travel Risks: How To Protect Yourself And Others While Travelling

It may have been awhile since you've seen your family, and you've been waiting until the Holidays to see them. Unfortunately, everyone else has the same idea, which makes travelling even riskier.

This holiday season poses some challenges, especially now that the number of travelers have hit pre-pandemic numbers for the first time.

Is it safe to travel this year, and put you and your loved ones at risk?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer. But, if individual travelers plan responsibly and intentionally, they can minimize their risk of getting coronavirus by a wide margin.

While a generic holiday vacation at this time wouldn't be recommended, a chance to gather with aging or long-isolated family members is certainly possible.

The leadership team at Collaborative Imaging, recommend the following:

1. If it's a trip that is important and necessary, use the proper protective measures like wearing a mask, distancing, disinfecting, and hand hygiene.
2. We also recommend only travel this holiday season if it's really necessary, particularly if you're traveling by air or any other form of public transportation.

How can you stay safe if you decide to travel?

If you are flying, the doctors recommend doubling down on CDC-recommended safeguards: always wear a mask covering your nose and mouth, wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. You may also consider a face shield to protect your eyes, but the CDC says they are not a substitute for masks.

Collaborative Imaging recommends thinking about where you are going in relation to the virus. Be sure to understand the COVID-19 levels in the area you are going to.

Be sure to also watch out for cold/flu during this peak season. During the winter, many more infections circulate, including influenza, common cold viruses, strep throat, and many other infections. Fortunately, the same steps that help prevent COVID-19 transmission also help prevent these other infections, like social distancing, wearing masks, and washing your hands frequently. It's a great idea to get the flu vaccine for added protection.

The larger risk of flying rather than driving. If your travels put you into close contact with other people, for example at airports or on airplanes, that does increase your risk of contracting and spreading the coronavirus. If you can travel by private vehicle, this could be safer.

It's worth mentioning that Airlines have taken greatly different approaches to coronavirus safety, so if you have to fly, Collaborative Imaging recommends that you research your carrier and choose wisely. Business Insider recommends using Delta because they have taken safety precautions above and beyond most of the others.

If you are traveling long distances by car, you will likely need to make stops along the way. But you can minimize the risks involved with such stops by avoiding crowds, wearing your mask (and only stopping where others are also in masks if other people are present), and washing your hands.

Collaborative Imaging recommends these measures to help prevent the continuing spread of covid-19. It's helpful to plan your gas station stops in advance. Many gas stations don't require masks so be sure to stop at safe stations.

If you have to eat on the road, Collaborative Imaging urges you do so outside whenever possible. Even safer: Bring everything you need in the car for picnic pit stops.

We advise wearing masks, even when you're just with the family you're visiting, and that COVID-19 testing and self-imposed quarantine periods can help make holiday gatherings much safer.

We underscore the importance of taking personal responsibility. To protect each other, do not travel if you're at all sick, or if you've been exposed to someone who either knows or suspects they might have COVID. In that case, you should quarantine for 14 days. When you do visit together, avoid hugging and staying close to each other – especially avoid kissing. This might be tough for grandparents and their grandchildren, but being flexible is important this year.

The overall takeaway from all of the experts, however, is resounding: Be flexible, be responsible, be informed – and be intentional about holiday travel this year, whatever decisions you make in the end.

Have safe and happy holidays.