

COVID-19 and Travel: Kent County Health Department's Guidance

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Does someone need to quarantine after travel?

Everyone currently has some level of risk for COVID-19 exposure. The purpose of quarantine is to prevent those who are at **higher risk** of having been exposed to COVID-19 from potentially spreading it to others. This is important because a person can be infectious without knowing it, especially before symptoms start. Also, some people with COVID-19 never have symptoms.

Traveling increases a person's risk of being exposed to the virus. However, participating in other higher risk activities such as attending large social gatherings or being in a crowded area also increase risk, whether someone travels or not. Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has seen outbreaks of COVID-19 because of local social gatherings.

The CDC recently removed the recommendation to complete a 14-day quarantine from its guidelines for all returning international travelers. Instead returning travelers are encouraged to:

- stay at least 6 feet away from others both indoors and outdoors.
- wear a mask that fits snug against the face and under the chin, covering the nose and mouth.
- wash hands often or use hand sanitizer.
- monitor closely for symptoms.

People who participated in higher risk activities or think that they may have been exposed during their travels should take additional precautions in the 14 days after returning from travel by:

- staying home as much as possible.
- avoiding being around people who are more likely to get very sick if exposed to COVID-19, especially older adults and those with other health concerns.
- considering getting tested for COVID-19.

For more travel information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

Maps of COVID-19 risk levels: <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

Considerations for Employers:

- Can your employee work from home after returning from travel?
- Was the employee cautious (e.g. wearing mask, washing hands, keeping physical distance from others, avoiding crowds and large gatherings, etc.) while traveling or did the employee participate in higher risk activities or visit a place that has a high rate of new COVID-19 cases?
- If your employee does not quarantine after returning from travel, what can be done in the workplace to reduce the risk to others in the workplace, especially those at higher risk of severe illness?

KCHD encourages employers to continue reminding all employees to be cautious at work and outside of work, whether the employee travels or not.

Should someone be tested for COVID-19 after returning from travel?

If someone has symptoms related to COVID-19, they should call their healthcare provider and schedule a test.

Research has not yet determined how long someone should wait to get tested after possibly being exposed to COVID-19. Currently KCHD suggests a person who does not have symptoms wait to get tested at least five days after close contact with someone who has COVID-19. This same timeframe could be applied to someone returning from travel and/or after participating in a higher risk activity. It is important to note COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure, therefore a negative test result in the 14 days after returning from travel does not mean that a person does not have COVID-19. This emphasizes the need for businesses to set up standard practices to reduce close contact among all employees.

Learn more about COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new virus. It spreads by respiratory droplets of an infected person to others with whom they have close contact. You can access up to date information on COVID-19 on the Centers for Disease Control's webpage at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.accesskent.com/Health/coronavirus.htm>



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