



COUNTY OF POLK
Health Department
www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health

Helen Eddy, Director
1907 Carpenter Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
Ph. 515.286.3798
Fax. 515.286.2033

COVID-19 and Spring Break Travel

Spring break is fast approaching and many parents, staff and students are questioning whether or not they should cancel their spring break trip in light of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is an ever evolving health concern. The information provided below is current as of March 11, 2020; however, it may have changed when you return back from you trip.

Before Travel

Most COVID-19 cases are associated with travel to or from China, person-to-person spread is now being reported in other places, including Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea. For the general public, who are unlikely to be exposed to the virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is low.

Iowa Department of Public Health is asking individuals who have China or Iran are being placed into a 14-day quarantine. Iowans returning from a country where novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is spreading to voluntarily self-isolate for 14 days following their return. Areas in this travel notice currently include: Italy, Japan and South Korea. This is a rapidly evolving health situation, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s website for the most up-to-date travel information.

At this present time, the CDC does not have any guidance on restricting travel in the United States. Again, this is current information and may change when you return from your trip. If you have questions regarding travel, please call your local health department. If you live in Polk County, please call (515) 286-3890. As a parent and guardian of a child, you are welcome to make your own decisions on whether or not to cancel your trip.

During Travel

Promote and practice personal protective measures and illness prevention strategies to slow the spread of viruses. The best way to prevent ANY illness is to avoid being exposed to a virus. There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your cough or sneeze preferably with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in the trash and wash hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

It is vital to protect the most vulnerable individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- If you have chronic conditions such as lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system, avoid unnecessary gatherings and events.
- If you have family or friends who have one of these conditions, do not visit them if you feel sick.

After Travel

If you traveled to China or Iran, you will be placed into a 14-day quarantine by public health. If you traveled to Italy, Japan and South Korea, you will be asked to voluntarily self-isolate for 14 days. For additional information about self-isolation, please visit: [Iowa Department of Public Health's Website](#).

As previously stated, there is no guidance from CDC regarding travel restrictions within the United States. If you think you your child has been exposed to COVID-19 on your spring break trip, please call your school nurse first becoming sending your child to school. The school nurse can help assess the situation and provide guidance regarding travel and COVID-19.

For frequently asked questions and answers regarding travel including: should I cancel my trip, is it safe to go on a cruise, risk of COVID-19 on an airplane and returning from a recently affected country, please visit: [CDC - Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)

COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving health situation. Information provided is up-to-date as of March 11, 2020. Please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s website for the most up-to-date travel information.