January 29, 2021
Health Department of Northwest Michigan COVID-19 Update

Travel safety tips in today's COVID environment

There may be snow on the ground, but many people are starting to think about planning a spring get-away, which may involve extra precautions due to the pandemic should one choose to travel at all.

"I am getting a lot of questions about travel and what, if any, restrictions or safety precautions should be taken in light of COVID-19," said Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan.

Despite your destination – within the United States or overseas – travelers should practice all the same safety mitigation practices they do at home, Meyerson said. However, travelers should be aware of the additional requirements of international travel for both their destination and return to the United States.

International Travel
Effective January 26, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control issued an order requiring all air passengers arriving to the U.S. from a foreign country to get tested no more than 3 days before their flight departs and to present the negative results or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight. After travel, families returning home must get tested 3-5 days after travel **and** stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days after travel. The CDC requires even if you test negative, you need to stay home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days. If your test is positive, you need to isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected, CDC requirements state. The CDC order applies to all air passengers, 2 years of age or older, traveling into the U.S., including U.S. citizens.

"For anyone traveling abroad to a non-U.S. destination or territory for a week-long spring break, these CDC requirements, upon return, add another week to 10 days of staying home and self-quarantining," Meyerson said, emphasizing how the travel abroad would impact returning to work or school for an additional 7-10 days.

For information about how and where to get tested in the country from which you are traveling or contact local authorities in that country, visit COVID-19 Country Specific Information.

Domestic Travel in US and Territories
For domestic travel the issue is not so much where you go but what you do, Meyerson said.

"We should all practice the same safety measures we do when we are home," Meyerson said. When away from home it is even more important to avoid crowded indoor spaces as much as possible, always wear a mask when inside a public space and when outside if safe distancing is not possible, he said. If an establishment doesn't seem safe due to crowds or others not masking, seek an alternate. Eating out should be outdoors, and carry out is much safer than dining in. If visiting friends and relatives, you should follow the same guidelines for "social bubbles" as you do at home and keep the number small.

"It's natural to want to let our guard down on vacation but none of us want to get sick away from home or bring this virus back to our communities," he added.

For more information about state specific risk levels, as determined by daily new cases, infection rate, and positive test rate, visit the [COVID ActNow website](#).

Free health department COVID-19 testing is still available weekly. No doctor's order or symptoms are necessary to get tested. To locate the testing site closest to you, call the health department at 1-800-432-4121.

Today the health department is reporting 14 new cases: Antrim (3), Charlevoix (4), Emmet (6), and Otsego (1) counties. As of 4 p.m. today, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (850), Charlevoix (986), Emmet (1,397), and Otsego (1,100).
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Antrim (610), Charlevoix (801), Emmet (1,112) and Otsego (909).
- Confirmed COVID-19 associated deaths in the following counties: Antrim (17), Charlevoix (11), Emmet (34), and Otsego (25).

The State of Michigan is reporting 557,883 cases and 14,497 deaths.

Stay up to date on the latest information in the Health Department of Northwest Michigan jurisdiction by [liking and following our Facebook page](#) and visiting our [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#).   To locate a testing facility, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder website.](#) To track the risk levels of COVID-19 pandemic indicators, visit the [MI Safe Start Map website](#). For more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, visit the MDHHS [vaccine website](#) or the [CDC vaccine website.](#)