
Camping after pandemic

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The coronavirus pandemic is still impacting travel, and destinations around the world have different COVID-19 restrictions in place. It's important to check and adhere to local government policies as you're planning any future trips.

You may be out in the open air, but safety rules still apply: If you're camping with people outside your household, mask up. "Masking, when at all feasible, should still be undertaken if you're with others," confirmed Kasten.

There are tons of options when it comes to nonmedical masks. If you're looking for a cloth face covering that's multifunction, you could also consider a Buff or bandana.

Camping is the safest way to travel.

One of the key findings of the report by KOA is that camping still ranks to be the safest form of travel, by a great margin. Both campers and non-campers believed so. Statistics show that 29% of general travelers, 45% of campers, and 15% of non-campers plan to replace their canceled or postponed trip with camping this year.

It's easy to see how camping has developed such widespread appeal over the centuries - leaving modern society and its headaches behind to bask in the immutable ambiance of the natural world is a lifelong dream for many people. In the wake of this turbulent pandemic, the full effects of cabin fever have begun to set in, and it would seem that camping is shaping up to be the perfect antidote. Combining safe social practices with the opportunity to surrender oneself to the pristine beauty of the earth, the activity is uniquely equipped to reach unprecedented heights in popularity.

Is it safe to go camping?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), getting outdoors is a relatively safe way to remain physically active, get fresh air and reduce stress. Don't travel if you feel ill, have recently tested positive for COVID-19 or know someone who has. Camp and travel with those you live with and continue to follow safe social distancing practices, like staying 6 feet away from others and wearing your mask, on the road and at destination.

It makes sense. To many of us, camping feels like a relatively safe way to reclaim a sense of normalcy and perhaps even socialize with a friend or two (six feet apart, with a campfire between everyone, of course). Even some of my less-than-outdoorsy friends are trying it out. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discourages long-distance travel and close contact with anyone outside your household, it considers camping with members of your household a low-risk endeavor.

The CDC also recommends that you check with the campground in advance to find out if the bathroom facilities are open and what services are available. This will help you prepare what you need ahead of time and avoid unexpected surprises.

Getting vaccinated when eligible

Staying home if sick or having symptoms of COVID-19

Universal and correct use of well-fitted masks that cover the nose and mouth

Physical distancing, including cohorting

Handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes

Engaging in outdoor activities whenever possible and increasing ventilation for indoor activities

Cleaning and disinfecting when needed, to maintain healthy facilities

Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, and tribal health departments

Wash your hands:

You're probably getting tired of hearing this advice, but good hygiene is absolutely necessary with it comes to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and other germs. The same goes for when you are traveling to the campground. "When you stop at gas stations, wear your mask, practice social distancing and wash your hands like you would when going to the grocery store," suggests Dr. Loyd.

"Not washing hands can put you at risk of having COVID-19 germs on your hands, which you could have gotten from things you have touched," explains Gomez, "Your risk of contracting COVID-19 increases by the fact that we all tend to touch our face without noticing it."

Maintaining Healthy Environments:

Camp administrators should implement several strategies in physical spaces to maintain a healthy camp environment.

Ventilation:

Camp activities should occur outside, as much as possible. If activities are held indoors, bring in as much fresh air into camp buildings as possible. Bringing fresh, outdoor air into your facility helps keep virus particles from concentrating inside. Open windows and doors when possible, use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows, and decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor ventilation cannot be increased. Ventilation, including opening windows when possible, is also important on camp transport vehicles.

Campers and staff should participate in activities outdoors whenever possible, while wearing masks and maintaining physical distance. They should not wear masks when swimming or during other water activities but should stay 6 feet apart.

Avoid group events, gatherings, or meetings where physical distancing between people cannot be maintained. Limit group size to the extent possible.

Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible, including for sporting events.

Campers can take trips outside of camp if there is no mixing or interaction with the general public outside of the camp population (for example, hiking trips, visits to a beach or lake).

Perform activities that have the potential to produce respiratory droplets including singing, chanting, shouting, or playing an instrument outside. Campers and staff should wear masks and maintain at least 6 feet physical distance during these activities.

New to Camping? Here's What to pack

Water

Food and cooking gear

A first aid kit

Sun protection

Clothing, including jackets, rain gear, etc.

Shelter: tent, sleeping gear and supplies

Flashlights and lanterns

Matches, lighters and fire starters

Repair kit and tools

Maps and navigation systems

Go on this trip:

While a totally spontaneous camping trip isn't recommended, a thoughtfully planned getaway might just be the best thing for your sanity.

"Activities like camping can be therapeutic and beneficial for our physical and mental health," said Dr. Juli Fraga, a psychologist. "Spending time outdoors can bolster our immune system, lessen symptoms of depression, invoke calm and bolster wellbeing. When we step away from distractions, noise and the go-go busyness of daily life, the body's nervous system calms down. When we're no longer in a stressful state, we can focus our attention on the present moment, which can be very meditative."

Can any one book a campsite now?

Yes! You certainly can. Of course, it is worth remembering that rules and openings can change in line with the wider pandemic situation – so it's best to check with the site or booking agent that you can cancel or transfer to future date if necessary. The majority of campsites are already offering increased flexibility with bookings and offering 'coronavirus guarantees'

The information contained in this article is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as health or medical advice. Always consult a physician or other qualified health provider regarding any questions you may have about a medical condition or health objectives.

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