

# COVID-19 Could Mean Changes in Summer Plans

*Editor's note: Because of the fast-moving nature of COVID-19, recommendations, statistics, and other information contained in this article may have changed from when it was written in late April 2020.*



There's a lot we still don't know about COVID-19, the novel coronavirus that by the end of April had sickened over 1 million Americans and resulted in more than 56,000 deaths across the country. One thing we do know, however, is that the virus has severely disrupted life for most people, even those who have not gotten sick.

Just months ago, we were free to come and go, as we pleased. We weren't thinking about schools being shut down, having to wear face masks, being unable to visit with friends and family, losing our jobs, or experiencing a shortage of cleaning supplies.

As government leaders look ahead, the medical community warns that reopening the country too soon could result in increased cases of the virus and, ultimately, delay a recovery.

Depending on the degree to which your community has been affected by the virus, you may need to rethink upcoming plans. That doesn't mean, however, that you can't expect to have an enjoyable – and healthy – summer.

## Summer Travel

Even as some states have started reopening beaches, restaurants, shops, and other businesses, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is recommending that you stay home as much as possible and limit travel.

Traveling long distances is particularly discouraged, as you could be exposed to areas with high levels of community transmission of the virus, making yourself and others vulnerable.

If you must travel, think about how you can reduce risk by limiting stops, making sure you wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently, carrying disinfectant wipes or spray and taking other precautions.



## Recreational Facilities

For many of us, summer means spending more time outdoors. You might plan to spend some time at the beach, go camping, play golf, or take some day hikes. While it's quite likely you'll be able to enjoy outdoor activities, how you participate may need to be adapted. Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House's coronavirus task force coordinator, said April 26 that some form of social distancing probably will remain in place through the summer.

That could make it difficult for community pools to open, or for children to attend camps and play together on playgrounds. Sporting activities, like Baseball games, are on hold. What facilities will be open for business, and when, depends on various factors. Those include where you live, how much illness is present in your community, the wishes of your local lawmakers, and the willingness of residents to engage.

The YMCA, which operates camps across the country, announced at the end of April, that they expect to run their day camp programs, beginning in June. Some overnight camps also were expected to open.

The National Park Service reported that, while most of its facilities were closed and events canceled, outdoor spaces in some parks – but not all – were open to the public. Golf courses in some areas have or will soon reopen.

Whatever you're able to do outside this summer, proceed with caution and good judgment. Experts advise that you avoid crowded areas and practice safe spacing. Don't share a golf cart, stay away from contact sports, and avoid touching surfaces and objects when possible.

Contact local facilities or officials to find out what's open and what regulations are in place.



## Look at the Bright Side

It's understandable to feel upset, or even angry, about the possibility of having to change or limit your summer plans. With so much about the virus, we still don't fully understand. However, it's smart to practice caution to increase your chances of staying well.

Concentrate on activities that won't put you at risk. Pack up a picnic and eat dinner in the back yard or at a nearby park that's not crowded. Invite a friend to take a walk in an area where you'll be able to stay a safe distance apart. Find a spot in the park and count how many varieties of birds you see. Sit outside to read. Call a friend you haven't spoken with for a while. Continue to stay in touch remotely with friends and relatives, paying special attention to those who may need help or be at risk. And, remember that one day, hopefully soon, we'll find a new normal and be able to resume all the activities we enjoy.

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Tips on Staying Safe Outdoors

Accessed at <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/covid-19-how-to-stay-safe-during-outdoor-activities>.

YMCA Camps Across the Country

Accessed at <https://www.ymca.net/camp>.

Tips for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Information on Traveling During the Pandemic

Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>