

# Travel Considerations for People with Down Syndrome [COVID-19]

March 2020 | Brian Chicoine, MD - Medical Director, Adult Down Syndrome Center

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**UPDATED MARCH 16, 2020:** The [CDC recommends](#) that people at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 avoid non-essential air travel. Many people with Down syndrome are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 for a number of reasons. These include immune deficiency related to Down syndrome and higher frequency of co-occurring conditions associated with higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19. Since travel also makes it challenging to maintain distance from others, we recommend that people with Down syndrome avoid non-essential air travel. For additional information about travel within the United States, please see the CDC website at [this link](#).

*The information below was shared on March 10, 2020. For the most up-to-date information, please see the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at [this link](#).*

We have received several questions about recommendations on travel for people with Down syndrome, in light of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Travel has not been banned within the United States. For information about travel both within and outside the United States, we recommend reviewing the CDC's information on travel at [this link](#). Although business travel has been cancelled by some companies and organizations, non-business travel (travel for personal reasons) has not been limited at this time.

Choosing whether or not to travel for non-business purposes remains a personal decision. At the Adult Down Syndrome Center, we are encouraging individuals with Down syndrome we serve and their families to consider their sense of comfort with the risk and their personal health histories as well as CDC recommendations when making the decision. For all potential travelers, we recommend talking with your health care provider if you have questions about traveling.



People with Down syndrome are more susceptible to respiratory infections. We are not aware of anyone with Down syndrome who has become infected with COVID-19. However, the risk with other respiratory infections would indicate people with Down syndrome would be more likely to become ill and more likely to become sicker if they are infected with COVID-19.

So how do you decide? Consider the following questions:

- Is this trip important enough to risk infection?
- How would I manage if I got infected or exposed while traveling? If I was hospitalized away from home? If I was quarantined and not able to travel home or go to work or school for 14 days?

Currently, there is not a vaccine for COVID-19. At this time, the main ways to stop the spread of the disease are:

- Limiting infecting yourself by performing good hand hygiene, disinfecting your environment, and avoiding touching your face.
- Limiting exposure to the virus. According to the CDC, we can reduce the possibility of respiratory droplets containing COVID-19 from landing on us by standing at least 6 feet from other people ([link](#)). Certain situations, such as being on a plane or in crowds, make it impossible to stay 6 feet away from others.

The short version of the recommendations: Wash your hands. Keep your environment disinfected. Stay home if you are sick. Avoid unnecessary contact with sick individuals. For travel, assess your risk, your comfort with the risk, and the importance of your travel and make a decision that is right for you.