

COVID-19 Testing Requirements for Travel

Frequently Asked Questions and Safe Travel Tips

Updated: 5/4/2021

Note: Fully vaccinated employees who follow CDC safe travel guidelines, stay asymptomatic, and have no known exposure to known or suspected COVID-positive individuals during travel are no longer required to have COVID testing before returning to work. This is another reason for employees to get vaccinated against COVID.

1. Has there been a recent change in guidance from the CDC and the Connecticut DPH relating to post-travel COVID testing?

Yes. Fully vaccinated individuals who follow CDC safe travel guidelines and do not have COVID-like symptoms are no longer required to have COVID testing before returning to work. This is another reason for employees to get vaccinated against COVID.

2. What does it mean to be “fully” vaccinated against COVID?

This means it has been two or more weeks since your second dose of Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or two or more weeks since your single dose of J&J/Janssen vaccine.

3. What are the CDC safe travel guidelines?

In brief, all travelers (whether traveling within the U.S. or internationally) will be safer if they follow expert guidelines that include: **1) wearing a mask, 2) avoiding crowds, 3) socially distancing, and 4) washing hands frequently.**

More specifically, the CDC warns travelers to avoid COVID infection by doing the following:

1. Mask During Travel:

- Mask (covering your nose and mouth) at all times when on a plane, train, bus or other public transport.

2. Limit Social Gatherings And Mask In Crowded Indoor Environments:

- Mask in any indoor setting, in a crowded setting or any setting in which there may be a mixture of vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, or unknown. Don't assume everyone has been vaccinated.

3. Caution While At Restaurants/Bars:

- Mask indoors except when eating or drinking, but then quickly re-mask.

4. Avoid Contact:

- Avoid contact with known or suspected COVID-positive individuals.
- If within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more during any 24-hour period of a known or suspected COVID-positive individual and you have not been masked at all times, you are required to have a negative COVID PCR test (not an antigen test) result before returning to work.

5. Frequent Hand Hygiene:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

A one-page outline of the current CDC safe travel guidelines can be accessed at:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/pdfs/324153_choosingSaferActivities11.pdf

4. If an employee has received only a single dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, do they need to be tested after travel?

Yes. The CDC recommends non-fully vaccinated individuals should ideally get tested 1-3 days before travel and again 3-5 days after travel. If they don't get tested when they return, then they should stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days from their return date.

It is important to note that the CDC also actively discourages non-essential domestic travel by those who are still not fully vaccinated.

5. What are the updated YNHHS testing requirements after travel?

- **Non-fully vaccinated travelers** (who have traveled anywhere out of state for 24 hours or more, including travel to NY, NJ or RI) are required to have a negative COVID test (preferably the more accurate PCR test, but an antigen test is also acceptable) within 72 hours prior to returning to onsite in a YNHHS facility. This testing can still be done in the state being visited or upon return.

New requirements for non-fully vaccinated unvaccinated travelers are as follows:

1. This applies to any out of state travel including to NY, NJ, or RI.
2. In addition to the initial test before returning to work, a COVID PCR test (not an antigen test) is required again in 5 days after returning to work.

A non-fully vaccinated traveler may opt to self-quarantine at home for 10 days instead of being tested upon return, but must use PTO during that time period.

Employees can continue to self-schedule a COVID PCR test at:

<https://ocucovidtesting.ynhhs.org/>

Note: If an employee lives out-of-state but regularly comes into Connecticut for work, they do not need to be tested as long as they are asymptomatic and compliant with CDC safe travel guidelines. The same applies for out-of-state employees who work in Rhode Island.

- **Travelers returning from international sites, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated,** will continue to be required a U.S.-mandated negative COVID PCR or antigen test prior to boarding their homebound flight. That same negative test suffices for initial clearance to

return to onsite work. In addition, a COVID PCR (not an antigen test) is test is required again in 5 days after returning to work for all non-fully vaccinated individuals.

- **Fully vaccinated travelers** who adhere to current CDC safe travel guidelines and are asymptomatic may return to onsite work without COVID testing. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Fully vaccinated travelers who do not adhere to current CDC safe travel** guidelines may return to onsite work as long as they are asymptomatic, but require a negative COVID PCR test (not an antigen test) within 72 hours after return to work if a COVID test was not done prior to return to work.

6. Are employees who have been fully vaccinated still required to self-monitor for COVID symptoms?

Yes. Although the COVID vaccines are very effective, they are not 100% and there are known cases in which fully vaccinated individuals contract COVID. As always, all employees should continue to self-monitor by taking their temperature twice a day (once before beginning work for the day) and remain alert for cough, shortness of breath, fatigue or other COVID-like symptoms.

Any employee who experiences any symptom(s) suggestive of COVID infection must stay at home and have a negative COVID PCR test (not an antigen test) before returning to onsite work.

As a reminder, COVID symptoms may include any one of a combination of the following: **fever, chills, coughs, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, body aches, profound fatigue, nausea/vomiting/GI symptoms, new headaches, sore throat, sinus congestion, runny nose and/or conjunctivitis.**

7. If a fully vaccinated individual did not fully follow the CDC safe travel guidelines for whatever reason, what do they need to do if they become aware that they had an exposure to a COVID-positive individual?

Any returning traveler (whether vaccinated or not) who has had an unmasked contact within 6 feet of a known or suspected COVID-positive individual for 15 minutes or more during a 24-

hour period must have a negative COVID PCR test (not an antigen test) before returning to onsite work. In addition, they must also meet the criteria outlined in Question #5 above.

Please note that YNHHS will continue to monitor the transmission or COVID-19 infection in Connecticut, Rhode Island and nationally. Therefore, these guidelines are subject to continued changes to ensure the safety of our patients and co-workers.