Colleague Travel Safety

July 8, 2020

Most often, the spread of virus from a living person happens with close contact (i.e., within about 6 feet) via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to the way that influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. This route of transmission should be considered when travel requires public transportation. These tips are designed to help colleagues who are assigned to alternate locations to travel successfully.

Before You Leave

- Assess your own health by taking your temperature prior to leaving and answering the COVID-19 screening questions. Should you find that you are symptomatic, immediately isolate and notify your supervisor.
- Assess the COVID-19 cases at the location to which you are traveling. If you are traveling for a work assignment, it will help to be prepared for necessary precautions when you arrive. Follow state and local travel restrictions. For up-to-date information and travel guidance, check the state or local health department where you are, along your route, and at your planned destination.
  - While you are traveling, it is possible a state or local government may put into place travel restrictions, such as stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders, mandated quarantines upon arrival, or even state border closures. Plan to keep checking for updates as you travel. Some state and local governments require you to quarantine for 14 days if you are traveling from a state with a significant level of COVID-19 transmission. If you will be working in a state with a significant level of transmission, you may be required to quarantine for 14 days after you arrive home*. If you are taking personal time to travel, be aware that you may be required to take PTO or unpaid work time when you return home to quarantine.
- Suggestion: Create an emergency contact list to keep on your person should you become ill or need assistance during transit. If you are at higher risk for severe illness, reconsider the need to travel during this timeframe and/or take extra precautions.
- Ensure that you have adequate hand sanitizer during travel until your return home.
- Bring enough of your medicine to last your entire trip; consider packing non-perishable foods and water to minimize the need to venture into restaurants or stores.

Auto Travel

- Limit the number of stops on the way to your destination.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer after pumping gas, opening and closing rest area doors, or touching any public surfaces. Use soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wear a cloth face covering in public.
- Use social distancing (maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet, if possible) at rest stops.
• If you are traveling overnight, ask if the hotel has updated policies about cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces; wearing cloth face coverings; and options for contactless check-in, payment, and self-parking (avoid valet services).

Air Travel
All commercial jet aircraft built after the late 1980s, and a few modified older aircraft, recirculate 10%–50% of the air in the cabin, mixed with outside air. The recirculated air passes through a series of filters 20–30 times per hour. In newer-model airplanes, the recycled air passes through high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, which capture 99.9% of particles (bacteria, fungi, and larger viruses or virus clumps) 0.1–0.3 μm in diameter. Furthermore, air generally circulates in defined areas within the aircraft, thus limiting the radius of distribution of pathogens spread by small-particle aerosols. As a result, the cabin air environment is not conducive to the spread of most infectious diseases.

• Reserve a window seat and monitor the airline seat guide to locate a seat that is a minimum of 6 feet from other passengers if possible. A center seat would be least desirable.
• Monitor the airline schedule to ensure your flight is on time
• Use social distancing in public areas while moving between parking, during boarding, and upon arrival/baggage pick-up.
• It is important to take these steps to reduce your chances of getting sick:
  o Secure a seat that is 6 feet away from others whenever possible.
  o Wear a cloth face covering while in the airport and during the flight
  o Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Notify the flight attendant should you observe a passenger with respiratory symptoms seated within six feet of your seat.
  o Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
  o Limit public restroom use enroute
  o Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol after touching any public surfaces
After Arrival

- Avoid public transportation, including travel between the airport and hotel – use a taxi or limousine (solo) if possible. Wear a cloth face covering.
- Minimize going out into the general population and use social distancing whenever out in public.
- Avoid crowds, stores, sporting or mass entertainment events, and other situations likely to attract large numbers of people.
- Eat in your hotel room or apartment with either contactless room service or use a delivery service.
- If in-room dining options are not available, eat at a restaurant located in the hotel. If not available at the hotel, eat at a restaurant located close to the hotel. If available and if weather permits, choose an outdoor seating option.
- Take your temperature twice a day (morning and evening). Monitor yourself for fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.

Ongoing

- Maintain a routine schedule with healthy foods and plenty of rest. Exercise regularly.
- Should you develop symptoms of illness, self-isolate and notify your local supervisor and MercyOne supervisor for further instructions.

Returning Home

- Colleagues may return to work immediately after returning from travel within the United States without quarantine unless they are returning from a state with endemic cases of COVID-19 and are required in their own state to quarantine; OR have been actively exposed to COVID-19 while not wearing PPE for transmission-based precautions; OR are exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 themselves.
- Colleagues returning from assignment that is remote from their primary affiliate will follow screening for symptoms and fever in place at their primary affiliate when reporting for their work shift.
  - If they have no symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 or a fever (> 100.0 F) continue to work. If symptoms or fever are detected – the colleague will notify their supervisor and leave work pending further instructions.
- Follow the current HR Assessing Health Care Personnel (HCP) with Possible Exposure to COVID-19 for any assigned work location or if the traveler colleague experiences exposure in the community.
- Each ministry is also monitoring all colleagues and clinicians using direct verification of body temperature and screening questions on symptoms of possible COVID-19 as they report to work for their shift.
- Traveler colleagues are also wearing a disposable, medical grade mask when entering the ministry for their shift as described in the PPE Booklet.

**A rare exception for return to work with a negative COVID-19 test may be made based on patient safety and business continuity**
References:
Travelers’ Health: Ch. 8; Travel by Air, Land & Sea: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2020/travel-by-air-land-sea/air-travel