

Can you skip quarantine if you've been vaccinated?

(courtesy The Point Guy, Christina Garofalo)

With COVID-19 vaccination rates accelerating across the United States, newly vaccinated Americans may be wondering whether COVID-19 travel quarantine rules still apply to them.

The short answer: Yes.

CDC guidance on domestic and international travel

As of its March 9, 2021 update, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still recommends that you “delay domestic and international travel,” stating simply that “travel increases your chance of spreading and getting COVID-19.”

But, given the promising data in clinical studies showing up to 94 percent efficacy of the [Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson Janssen vaccines](#), many travel industry insiders believe that guidance may change. Such beliefs were given new hope Thursday when sources within the White House suggested [it could relax restrictions on travel](#) within the U.S., and with Canada, Mexico, Brazil, the U.K. and Europe by mid-May.

If you are traveling now, the CDC has laid out several [guidelines specifically directed toward the fully vaccinated](#). To start, the CDC uses the term “fully vaccinated” to refer to someone who has waited two weeks after receiving their second dose of a two-dose vaccine series, or to someone who has waited two weeks after receiving a one-dose vaccine. In other words, don't schedule your shot and flight to happen on the same day.

The CDC also still recommends getting tested for COVID-19 before and after you travel. According to the updated guidelines, a fully vaccinated traveler should get tested one to three days before their flight and carry a copy of their negative test result with them while traveling in case authorities ask to see it. They also recommend getting a second test three to five days afterward. You can go to a [COVID-19 testing facility](#) or try an [at-home test kit](#) that is approved for travel purposes.

If you have trouble getting an appointment or finding a test site after your trip, the CDC recommends that you self-quarantine for 10 days instead.

Will other countries let vaccinated individuals skip quarantine?

More than [90 countries have reopened to U.S. tourists](#), and in the last few weeks, several countries have announced they plan to allow proof of vaccination as an alternative to existing testing and quarantine requirements.

The Seychelles, an archipelago off the east coast of Africa, already admits anyone, from any country outside of South Africa, who can prove they have had the final dose of any vaccine at least two weeks before arrival. From March 25, however, the island chain will reopen its

borders to everyone, regardless of vaccination status in a move likely boosted by the fact that they have vaccinated 70 percent of the population.

Thailand's Minister of Public Health, Anutin Charnvirankul, announced earlier this week that the country plans to reduce its mandatory quarantine from 14 to seven days for fully vaccinated foreigners arriving in Thailand. The plan is likely to go into effect in April. Even with the vaccine, visitors will still be required to show negative COVID-19 within three days of departure.

Other countries with relaxed restrictions for travelers with proof of vaccination include Estonia, Poland, [Iceland](#) and Romania.

It's important to note that there are still no COVID-19 vaccinations approved for children, so travelers looking to go overseas should leave the kids at home. Slovenia is [one notable exception](#) as it allows children under into the country if they travel with a "close family member" who has not been made to quarantine or was otherwise restricted from entry.

Local mandates and restrictions may still be in force

"Travelers should still be aware of the local recommendations, government rules of their destination as the CDC guidelines are not widely adopted by all countries and places," says Dr. Jenny Yu, MD FACS. As Healthline's Senior Manager of Medical Integrity, Dr. Yu is in charge of ensuring accurate and consistent medical content.

As you can imagine, recommendations vary greatly by state.

Take California as one example. According to the [California Department of Public Health](#), Californians should not travel more than 120 miles from their home and should avoid nonessential travel. The CDPH also "strongly discourages" travelers from other states or countries to visit for tourism and recreation. They advise anyone who does travel into California to self-quarantine for 10 days, unless quarantining is impracticable and you're solely traveling for the purpose of critical healthcare.

Compare that with New York, which has separate [rules for visitors](#) who have not been vaccinated and those who have. Visitors who have not been vaccinated must get tested before and after travel, or else be stuck doing 10 days of quarantine. On the other hand, visitors who have been fully vaccinated and satisfy a couple of other criteria — vaccinated less than three months ago and asymptomatic since — are exempt from quarantine.

In short, right now, you still need to follow all rules set forth by government agencies. So, in some places, even fully vaccinated people may be asked to voluntarily quarantine upon arrival or undergo a mandatory quarantine. The rules and recommendations are very fluid right now. Always check for up-to-date information with the relevant authorities at your destination.