Faculty & Staff ObieSafe Travel Tips

Members of our Oberlin community will be traveling November 25 – January 3 for a variety of reasons, including faculty and staff who may travel to see family or to take a vacation.

During the pandemic, travel introduces a health risk that can be mitigated by taking appropriate steps. To protect ourselves, as well as those we are traveling with or are going to see, it is important that we reduce the risk of contracting COVID and spreading it to others. The following guidelines can help keep everyone safe!

Prior to leaving Oberlin:

- In the two-week period prior to leaving Oberlin in November, be even more vigilant than usual. Minimize contact with others. Always wear your mask, maintain social distance, wash hands and disinfect surfaces. Minimize the number of people you see in enclosed spaces.
- You will be tested once through Oberlin’s protocol in November, but if you feel the need to secure additional testing prior to leaving campus, urgent care centers in the area may provide tests at your expense. Remember that tests provide insight into your status only at the point in time when you are tested.

Check your destination:

COVID-19 cases are on the rise in many areas of the country and world. It’s a good idea to check your destination prior to making plans to see if there are increasing cases and deaths which place you at greater risk. There may also be quarantine mandates in place.

- Ohio COVID-19 Travel Advisory
- United States COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by State
- COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination

During your trip:

- If you go by car....
  - It is the safest mode of transportation, as it minimizes close contact with others.
  - Travel with wipes and hand sanitizer.
  - Bring food and drink to decrease the need to stop at restaurants or make purchases.
  - Stop at open rest areas. Wear a mask and social distance if you need to stop to use a restroom.
  - If you need gas, wear gloves or cover the gasoline pump handle with a cloth. Sanitize your hands immediately after pumping gas.
  - If you stay in a hotel, ask if they follow the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control to keep guests safe.
If you stay with friends, wear a mask at all times while in their home and maintain social distance. If you plan to eat meals together, it is best to do so outside or at least at a distance from members of the other household.

- If you go by plane....
  - If possible, use an airline that limits capacity, including leaving middle seats open.
  - Travel with wipes and hand sanitizer.
  - Be vigilant about wearing a mask and wiping down the table tray, arm support and other surfaces.
  - Use hand sanitizer frequently and avoid touching your face and eyes.
  - Employ these measures on a train or bus as well.

**Upon arrival at your destination:**

- Although it may be difficult, wearing a mask indoors and maintaining social distance with family and friends for a 14-day period will decrease the risk of viral spread. After the 14-day period, if everyone at your location has followed guidelines, then masks and distance can be relaxed.
- Periodic testing of family and friends you are living with can be very useful. Availability of non-symptomatic testing varies by region.
- Social gatherings are routine in November and December but should be minimized this year. Wear your mask at every gathering and maintain distance. Gatherings in enclosed spaces increases the risk.
- If you develop symptoms, contact a health care provider immediately to discuss next steps.

Adapted from Safe Travel Information for College Students and Parents (https://uspirg.org/blogs/covid-19/usp/safe-travel-information-college-students-and-parents)

**General principles:**

- Wear a [mask](https://uspirg.org/blogs/covid-19/usp/safe-travel-information-college-students-and-parents) to keep your nose and mouth covered when in public settings.
- Avoid close contact by [staying at least 6 feet apart](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html) (about 2 arms’ length) from anyone who is not from your household.
- [Wash your hands](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html) often frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren’t available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
