

Discovery Vitality travel frequently asked questions

1. Should you travel to areas affected by COVID-19? Considering the risks around COVID-19, should you travel at all? South Africa now has set of rules about travelling.

Travel is one of the main ways COVID-19 has been making its way around the world. Our country has now placed some restrictions on international travel to and from South Africa.

Visas are being cancelled and even local travel has to be reconsidered in the weeks ahead as we tackle the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a country.

The [virus that causes COVID-19](#) is highly transmissible and its swift spread has meant new hotspots presenting almost daily across the world, forcing a rethink of travel plans. Some countries have gone so far as to cancel international travel outright, in the short-term.

Here's what you need to know about travelling abroad from, and returning to, South Africa. In an announcement made on 15 March, President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the following:

- Surveillance, screening and testing at our international airports will be strengthened.
- There is a travel ban for visitors from **high-risk countries** such as Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and China from 18 March 2020. All visas for visitors from these countries or visitors who travelled in these countries in the past 20 days will also be cancelled and revoked.
- Every person who travelled to and from a high-risk country, including those who travelled since mid-February, has to be tested for COVID-19. It's also advised to quarantine or self-isolate.
- Avoid travel to or through the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other identified high-risk countries such as China, Iran and South Korea.
- Every person who has travelled to and from **medium-risk countries** – including Portugal, Hong Kong and Singapore – will have to undergo intensive screening.

All non-essential domestic travel has also been discouraged – that includes travel by air or rail and shared transport by taxi and bus. As the level of risk changes, the travel restrictions to specific cities, countries or regions will be reviewed and updated.

The list of corporate, [sporting](#), [scientific](#) and other global [events and attractions](#) that have been cancelled is also growing.

- [View the WHO's daily Situation Reports on COVID- 2019 here.](#)

Outbound travel

- *All individuals should cancel their international travel plans to:*
High-risk countries such as Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and China. Also, avoid travelling through the European Union and other identified high-risk countries such as, Japan, Iran and South Korea.
- *Cancel all non-essential local travel*
Non-essential travel must be avoided to limit occurrence of respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. This travel advice applies to all layovers at airports as well.

Most important: Ensure that you comply with instructions from local authorities on any restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings.

Inbound travel

Travellers returning from high-risk countries should

- Self-quarantine or work from home for 14 days and take their temperature twice a day upon return from any high-risk countries as listed above.
- Have a heightened awareness and self-monitor upon return from all countries.
- Follow country protocols around international and local travel.

If you were in a high-risk country and feel sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing, within 14 days of your return, you should:

- Seek medical advice: Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel history and your symptoms
- Avoid close contact with others
- Not travel on public transportation while sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing

If travel cannot be avoided, the following precautionary measures should be adhered to during travel:

- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60% to 95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- It is especially important to clean your hands after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Supplies of hand sanitizer, tissues, and other hygiene products may be limited, so consider bringing them with you.
- Pay attention to your health during travel and for 14 days after you have travelled.

Avoid travel and shared transport if you have symptoms of possible COVID-19

Everyone with the primary symptoms of COVID-19 should avoid travelling with shared transport, and not at all if possible. People who have a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness and choose to travel by shared transport, should wear a face mask. If the symptoms of COVID-19 develop while a person is travelling, it's important to inform the transport staff/crew and seek medical care as soon as possible.

Social distancing is encouraged at all times and means remaining out of:

- Public places where close contact with others may occur (such as shopping centres, movie theatres, stadiums).
- Workplaces (unless the person works in an office space that allows distancing from others).
- Schools and other classroom settings.
- Local public transportation (such as on a bus, train, taxi, ride share, plane, ship)

2. I am a Vitality member and booked my flight through a Vitality travel partner, can I rebook or get a refund on my flight?

Please contact our travel partners directly, to manage all bookings and refunds. Kindly note that our travel partners are experiencing high call volumes at the moment.

For domestic bookings, please must refer to [Kulula](#) or [BA](#) websites.

For all international bookings, please email Comair on vitalitytravel@comair.co.za with the departure date in the subject line.

We recommend that Vitality members heed President Ramaphosa's call to limit all non-essential travel. For essential travel, members should:

- Check with the airline and accommodation to see if they have any travel restrictions in place and ask about their cancellation policies.
- Check the destination's risk level and find out what type of travel or lifestyle restrictions are in place.
- Visit the websites of the [National Institute of Communicable Diseases \(NICD\)](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) for updates.

We will update members with information from our travel partners as swiftly as possible.

Please also refer to partner websites.

For more information

- See the [National Department of Health's Travel Advice for South Africans travelling to affected countries](#)
- Visit the CDC's [Travel Health Notices](#) page and [destination page](#) for updates regarding these warnings

Visit the NICD website at www.nicd.ac.za for further information. For medical/clinical related queries by health care professionals only, contact the NICD Hotline +27 (0) 82 883 9920 (for use by healthcare professionals only). For laboratory related queries call the Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis (011-555- 0315/7/8 or 011-555-0488).

[Guidelines and case definitions](#) are available on the NICD website

Visit the [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel](#) for regular updates.

All medical information found on this website including content, graphics and images, is for educational and informational objectives only. Discovery Health publishes this content to help to protect and empower all South Africans by promoting a better understanding of COVID-19.

Discovery Vitality follows local and global guidelines on COVID 19 developed by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and the World Health Organization. We cannot advise our members whether they should travel or not; however, if you are planning to travel during the COVID 19 outbreak, read more [here](#).

3. Should you use a medical mask while travelling if you are not sick?

It is not a specific requirement that travellers wear face masks to protect themselves from COVID-19. You may still choose to wear a mask, but it is more important that the precautionary measures listed above be adhered to. Masks should be used appropriately to prevent the spread of disease-carrying droplets, or by those caring for an ill person to protect themselves from contracting an illness.

4. What measures are in place in South Africa?

On arrival in South Africa, travellers undergo health screening, including having their temperature taken and being asked to fill out a symptom questionnaire. Travelers with signs and symptoms of illness (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) will have an additional health assessment. There are procedures in place for isolation, rapid specimen collection and management at hospitals with isolation facilities.