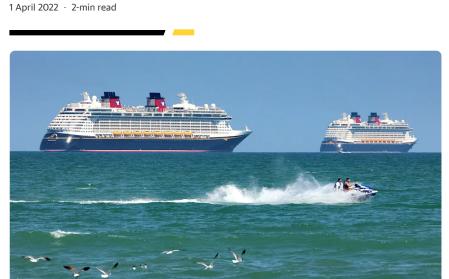


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Cruise travel restrictions lifted: U.S. CDC scraps COVID-19 risk advisory



Jet skiers pass the Disney Cruise Line ships Fantasy (left) and Dream on the horizon as they sit stationary off of Cocoa Beach in this view from Lori Wilson Park, Wednesday, March 24, 2021. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel/Tribune News Service via Getty Images) (Orlando Sentinel via Getty Images)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has removed its "cruise ship travel health notice" after two years of warning travellers about COVID-19 infections linked to boarding a cruise ship.

A statement from the CDC reads that now travellers can make "their own risk assessment" when choosing to go on a cruise.

"Today's decision by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to altogether remove the Travel Health Notice for cruising recognizes the effective public health measures in place on cruise ships and begins to level the playing field, between cruise and similarly situated venues on land, for the first time since March 2020,"

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communities they visit and are sailing today with health measures in place that are unmatched by virtually any other commercial setting."



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The CDC does still advise cruise travellers to make sure they are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines before boarding a ship.

"The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily between people in close quarters on board ships. If the virus is spreading on board a cruise ship, passengers and crew are at risk for infection, even if they are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines," the CDC warns.

Three months ago, cruise travel was in the Level 4, highest risk travel category, as COVID-19 cases, particularly Omicron cases, surged.

Canada will welcome the first cruise ships back to Canadian waters in April, with measures including a fully vaccinated crew and travellers, with limited exemptions for children under the age of 12, a medical contraindication and religious belief.

"As Canadians continue to do their part by stepping up and rolling up their sleeves to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and practising public health measures, our government continues to work hard to restart our economy safely and sustainably," a statement from transport minister Omar Alghabra reads.

"We welcome cruise ships—an important part of our tourism sector—back to Canada, and we will continue working with partners to support this important industry."

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