



Hike Healthy: Avoiding COVID-19 infection on the Appalachian Trail



COVID-19 (commonly referred to as “Coronavirus”) is a highly contagious respiratory virus that has been diagnosed in the majority of the states along the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). Initial symptoms of COVID-19 appear between **2-14 days after exposure** to the virus and include **fever, cough, and shortness of breath**. However, some may experience more severe symptoms, including **difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face**. Those who experience any of these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

In order to minimize your risks of contracting COVID-19, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy recommends that all hikers follow the guidelines below, which are based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization.

- ✦ **Wash your hands** frequently with biodegradable soap at least 200 feet from water sources. When soap is not available, use hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol.
- ✦ **Avoid sharing food.** Do not eat out of the same food bag, share utensils or drink from other hikers' water bottles.
- ✦ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**
- ✦ **Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.** Use a tissue and dispose of it using Leave No Trace Principles
- ✦ **Keep some distance between you and other hikers whenever possible,** especially if anyone shows signs of being sick. Avoid shaking hands or other close contact — instead, elbow bumps or waving are safer ways to greet others.
- ✦ **Avoid congregating in groups along the Trail.**
- ✦ If you are an older adult or have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes or lung disease, you are at a higher risk of serious complications from COVID-19 disease. **Hike and camp away from others to minimize the likelihood of infection.**
- ✦ If you begin feeling sick, **stay away from others and get off the Trail** until examined and cleared for return to the Trail by a medical professional.
- ✦ If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 while on the A.T., please submit a report to the ATC with as much detail as possible using the form at <https://appalachiantrail.org/report-covid-19>.

For more information about COVID-19 and prevention tips, please visit cdc.gov/covid19.

For additional information on how the COVID-19 outbreak is affecting Appalachian Trail facilities and ATC visitor centers, please visit appalachiantrail.org/updates.