

Virus and elderly: Avoid crowds, cruises, long plane trips

March 9 2020, by Lindsey Tanner



Playwright Vicki Quade poses for a portrait at the North & Clybourn Streets "L" station Monday, March 9, 2020, in Chicago. Older adults, those 60 and up like Quade should avoid crowds, cruises and long plane trips to avoid the coronavirus, advice that one public health official acknowledged won't be welcomed by many. Quade, 66, said she thinks most of the advice is extreme. "Yes, be a bit more cautious, wash your hands and if you're not feeling good, stay inside," "I'm not that worried. Perhaps I should be but I think we have to continue just living our lives," Quade said. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

The U.S. government's coronavirus recommendations tell older adults to avoid crowds, cruises and long plane rides—advice that one public health official acknowledged won't be welcomed by many.

"Our goal is to protect you," Dr. Nancy Messonnier of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Monday. "This will require you and your family to take action."

She acknowledged many people won't welcome the tips, but said, "these are the kind of recommendations that I've made for my parents," who are in their 80s.

Among the CDC's recommendations for [older adults](#):

- Avoid unnecessary travel, including long plane trips and cruises.
- Avoid crowds and stay home as much as possible.
- Keep extra supplies of medicines handy.
- Call your doctor if you develop fever, cough or [shortness of breath](#), and get immediate medical help for [severe symptoms](#) including difficulty breathing, persistent chest pain or confusion.

Messonnier reiterated the precautions that were issued last week by U.S. health officials.

The CDC doesn't specify age for the recommendations on its website, but "starting at age 60, there is an increasing risk of disease, and the risk increases with age," said Messonnier, adding that the highest risk is in people older than 80. Roughly 20% of the U.S. population is aged 60 and

older.

COVID-19 has infected 600 people in the U.S., and at least 25 have died, most in Washington state. Cases worldwide have topped 111,000 and more than 3,800 people have died, most in China.

Vicki Quade, a 66-year-old Chicago playwright, said she thinks most of the advice is extreme.

"Yes, be a bit more cautious, wash your hands and if you're not feeling good, stay inside," Quade said. She has [rheumatoid arthritis](#) that she knows puts her more at risk but has no plans to give up going to plays, movies and out to eat.

"I'm not that worried. Perhaps I should be but I think we have to continue just living our lives," Quade said.

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Citation: Virus and elderly: Avoid crowds, cruises, long plane trips (2020, March 9) retrieved 20 April 2024 from

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