

Over-70s and at-risk Brits advised against travelling on cruise ships

- new advice applies to those aged over 70 and with relevant pre-existing health conditions
- advice based on medical concerns around the unique environment of cruise ships and the risk they can pose to vulnerable passengers
- announcement part of wider government advice to support the health and safety British nationals overseas including new recommendation against school trips overseas

British nationals aged 70 and over, and those with underlying health conditions such as chronic diseases and diabetes, have been advised not to travel on cruise ships in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

The new advice is based on guidance from the Chief Medical Officer and follows a number of cases around the world of cruise ships experiencing outbreaks on board.

The Chief Medical Officer has advised that over-70s and vulnerable travellers with pre-existing health conditions should not travel on cruise ships. Travellers with existing cruise travel plans should speak to their operator, transport and accommodation provider for further advice.

As has been seen in a number of high-profile cases, transmission of COVID-19 on board cruise ships is more likely due to the nature and design of a ship's environment, the higher volume and density of people on board, and the social mixing.

A Foreign & Commonwealth Office spokesperson said:

Based on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer, we are now advising against all travel on cruise ships for passengers aged 70 years and over, and those with high-risk conditions.

Our first priority is the safety of British nationals. The nature and design of cruise ships – where passengers are contained and the virus can spread faster – makes them a particularly risky environment for vulnerable people. We've already seen the impact a coronavirus outbreak can have on board a cruise ship and we have changed this advice with the safety of British nationals in mind.

This list is not exhaustive – if in doubt and you have a chronic health condition ask your doctor.

Further information