



# CruiseAware.com™

Travel Smart. Travel Safe.

## This Week in Cruise Health & Safety

Week of July 20, 2026

### 1) TOP HEALTH & SAFETY HEADLINES



#### Another Gastrointestinal Illness Reported on Alaska Cruise

National Geographic Sea Bird had its third gastrointestinal illness event in two months, affecting 18 passengers. Likely norovirus.

**Concern level:**  
● Probably not

#### Key takeaway:



Wash hands, report symptoms, stay in cabin if ill.



#### Ruby Princess Norovirus Outbreak Concludes

More than 100 passengers and 23 crew became ill on a 20-day Alaska and Canada voyage. Princess Cruises enhanced sanitation before returning to service.

**Concern level:**  
● Possibly

#### Key takeaway:



Outbreaks are usually manageable; handwashing matters.



#### CDC Continues Monitoring Cruise Illness Reports

The CDC Vessel Sanitation Program continues transparent outbreak reporting.

**Concern level:**  
● No

#### Key takeaway:



Reporting shows surveillance is working.



#### Atlantic Hurricane Season Remains Quiet

No major storms are currently disrupting widespread cruise itineraries.

**Concern level:**  
● No

#### Key takeaway:



Keep monitoring forecasts and buy travel insurance before peak storm season.



#### Summer Travel Volumes Continue to Increase

Fuller ships, busier airports, and crowded destinations can increase spread of illness.

**Concern level:**  
● Probably not

#### Key takeaway:



Expect congestion, but simple precautions remain effective.



### 2) CRUISE INDUSTRY INTELLIGENCE



- Princess Cruises continues enhanced sanitation following recent illness reports.



- Expedition operators are reviewing infection-control measures after multiple Alaska voyage illness events.



- Cruise lines continue investing in ventilation, onboard medical capabilities, and digital health reporting.



### 3) DESTINATION INTELLIGENCE SPOTLIGHT

#### Skagway, Alaska



Peak cruise season, long daylight hours, cool temperatures.



**Weather:** 60–70°F (16–21°C), common rain showers, pack a waterproof jacket.



**Health:** stay hydrated and dress in layers.



**Food & Water:** tap water is safe; fresh seafood is generally a good choice when properly prepared.



**Transportation:** many attractions are walkable; excursions or rentals add flexibility.



**Emergency number:** 911.



**Scam awareness:** verify independent excursions before paying.



**Local custom:** do not approach wildlife.



**Hidden gem:** Reid Falls.



**Often overlooked:** weather changes quickly; carry a light rain layer.



Page 2: Norovirus guidance, excursion safety, preparedness checklist, quick tips & more.

Cruise confidently. Travel prepared. Stay informed.



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### 1) HEALTH INTELLIGENCE — NOROVIRUS



Norovirus is the leading cause of gastrointestinal illness aboard cruise ships.



It spreads through contaminated hands, food, surfaces, and close contact.



Most healthy adults recover in one to three days, but dehydration can be serious for young children, older adults, and people with chronic medical conditions.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Wash hands with soap and water before eating.
- ✓ Report symptoms immediately to the ship's medical center.
- ✓ Stay hydrated if illness develops.



### 2) TRAVEL SAFETY INTELLIGENCE — EXCURSION SAFETY



Most cruise excursions are safe, but injuries most often occur during adventure activities.



**Common mistakes:** inappropriate footwear, ignoring weather conditions, becoming dehydrated.



**Best practice:** carry water, wear closed-toe shoes when appropriate, and follow guides' instructions.



**Expert recommendation:** choose excursions that match your fitness level, not your ambition.



### 3) MYTH VS. FACT

#### MYTH

Hand sanitizer completely prevents norovirus.

#### FACT

Soap and water are generally more effective because alcohol-based sanitizers have limited effectiveness against norovirus.

#### WHY THE MYTH PERSISTS

Sanitizer works well against many respiratory viruses, so travelers assume it works equally well against every infectious disease.



### 4) TRUSTED RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT



#### CDC Vessel Sanitation Program

- Monitors gastrointestinal illness outbreaks aboard cruise ships calling on U.S. ports.
- Publishes inspection reports and outbreak information.
- Useful for objective information about ship sanitation history.
- CruiseAware recommends it for transparent, evidence-based public health information.



### 5) BY THE NUMBERS

# 102

passengers who became ill aboard the Ruby Princess during its recent gastrointestinal illness outbreak.



### 6) CRUISEWARE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST — PACKING MEDICATIONS

- ✓ Carry medications in your carry-on.
- ✓ Bring enough for several extra days.
- ✓ Pack prescriptions in original containers.
- ✓ Bring a small first-aid kit.
- ✓ Include oral rehydration salts.
- ✓ Carry copies of prescriptions.
- ✓ Verify medication legality abroad.



### 7) ASK CRUISEWARE

**Q:** Should I cancel my cruise if there has recently been a norovirus outbreak on the same ship?

**A:** In most cases, no. Cruise lines typically implement enhanced cleaning, disinfection, and surveillance before returning ships to service. The greater risk is often exposure to an ill passenger rather than contamination left behind. Best protection: wash hands with soap and water, avoid self-service food when crew are serving, and report symptoms promptly. A recent outbreak alone is generally not a reason to cancel unless health authorities issue specific recommendations.



### 8) QUICK TIPS



Wash your hands before every meal.



Carry medications in your carry-on luggage.



Save digital copies of your passport.



Pack a lightweight rain jacket for shore excursions.



Review your travel insurance before departure.



### 9) LOOKING AHEAD

- Atlantic hurricane development.
- Additional gastrointestinal illness reports.
- Peak Alaska cruise season operations.
- Summer travel congestion at major embarkation ports.
- Updates from the CDC Vessel Sanitation Program.



### 10) SOURCES CONSULTED

This briefing was prepared using publicly available information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the CDC Vessel Sanitation Program, and recent reporting corroborating official public health announcements.

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## Health & Safety Insights Before You Sail.