



Q: Both late 60s, we're sailing on our first cruise next month. We have concerns about health and safety on the ship and when we visit ports. Can you give us a couple of basic rules? *Jean P., Oxnard CA*

A: Cruising continues to be one of the most popular senior travel preferences. A concern many people voice when considering their first is safety. Cruises are generally quite safe, but there are always things that beginners and cruise veterans can do to keep themselves safe:

1. Pay close attention to your safety briefing. Most cruise lines give a mandatory safety orientation on the first day. Don't view this as an inconvenience, but rather as an important introduction. You'll be instructed what to do in case of an emergency. Become familiar with how to get from cabin to emergency station.
2. Take care of your health. Use your cabin restroom facilities instead of public ones as much as possible to avoid exposure to contagious illnesses. Carry antibacterial wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. If you're on prescription meds, be sure you have an adequate supply for the length of the cruise plus a couple of days.
3. Wear appropriate shoes. Cruise ships are generally quite stable, but it is important to wear sensible shoes with rubber grip soles, particularly when walking on the deck. Do walk barefoot, even when going to and from the pool.
4. Leave valuables at home. Your cruise may have a dress-up night when guests are encouraged to come to dinner in less casual attire. If you must bring valuables with you, visit the boat's administration desk for information on using the ship's safe.
5. Keep cash out of sight. When you leave the ship, be sure money is in a money belt under your clothes. Keep a small amount of cash in a pocket for quick purchases, and go somewhere quiet to access money and credit cards.
6. Don't travel alone. This applies to both the cruise experience itself and ashore. Single

travelers are most likely to be the victims of street crime. The buddy system is your first and best line of defense.

7. Drink in moderation. Alcohol is freely available at ship's meals, poolside, bars and casino. If you plan to have more than a few drinks, it's best to do so in the safety of your cabin.