

Infographic: Airlines have installed ‘hospital quality’ air circulation systems and other safety measures

Despite substantial numbers of travelers, the number of suspected and confirmed cases of in-flight COVID-19 transmission between passengers around the world appears small (approximately 42 in total). In comparison, a study of COVID-19 transmission aboard high-speed trains in China among contacts of more than 2300 known cases showed an overall rate of 0.3% among all passengers. Onboard risk can be further reduced with face coverings, as in other settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Steps being taken at airports and on board can include temperature testing and/or asking about symptoms (fever, loss of sense of smell, chills, cough, shortness of breath); enhanced cleaning and disinfection; contactless boarding/baggage processing; use of physical barriers and sanitization in airports; physical distancing in airports and during boarding; use of face coverings or masks; separation between passengers on board when feasible; adjustment of food and beverage service to reduce contact; control of access to aisles and bathrooms to minimize contact; limiting exposure of crew members to infection; and facilitation of contact tracing in the event that a passenger develops infection.

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Wear a mask, don’t travel if you feel unwell, and limit carry-on baggage. Keep distance from others wherever possible; report to staff if someone is clearly unwell. If there is an overhead air nozzle, adjust it to point straight at your head and keep it on full. Stay seated if possible, and follow crew instructions.

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