



# Travel Medicine Clinical Guidelines Australia and New Zealand



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# Prevention of COVID-19 infection during Air Travel

Recommendations to reduce the risk of infection during air travel include:

- Social distancing and mask-wearing during waiting, embarkation, and disembarkation.
- Minimise the time in the airbridge as that area maybe be poorly ventilated, and social distancing is less enforced.
- Consider embarking towards the end of the boarding process to reduce time on the aircraft.
- Larger planes are fitted with HEPA filters, and fresh air is mixed with filtered air many times per hour. This, therefore, reduces infection risk, but one should still take precautions as listed below.
- Ensure a tight-fitting mask is worn throughout the flight, including when in toilets.
- Aircraft may not have ventilation and filtration systems during embarkation and disembarkation; therefore, these times pose a higher risk of being infected if COVID-19 positive patients are on the flight.
- It is recommended to open and direct the personal vent onto or just in front of one's face
- Avoid eating and drinking on short flights where possible to reduce the risk of transmission.
- For longer flights, or when a mask must be removed, try to do so when others on the aircraft are still masked.
- Remove masks to eat/drink prior to other passengers where possible.
- Removing a mask to eat/drink after others have finished eating/drinking would theoretically expose oneself to more viral particles if other travellers were not wearing their mask.
- Limit movement around the aircraft.
- Avoid touching high touchpoints (toilet door, flush, tap) where possible, and if not possible, perform hand hygiene carefully and regularly.