

COVID-19

How to prevent transmission on board airline aircraft

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What is the risk of transmitting COVID-19 in flight?

Published studies:

- Contact tracing for a flight China-Canada revealed no transmission
- Contact tracing for a flight New York – Taipei no transmission (all tested)
- One pre-publication suggested transmission but no information provided
- One pre-publication suggested transmission but looks very unlikely

What is the risk of transmitting COVID-19 in flight?

IATA Analysis:

- We asked medical contacts of 18 airlines (14% global traffic) about any cases of suspected in-flight transmission:
 - 3 instances suspected passenger to crew
 - 4 instances pilot to pilot (but timing unknown)
 - None of passenger to passenger
- More detailed examination – 4 airlines with public health follow up of 1100 confirmed cases post-flight (total pax >>100K).
 - No known secondary cases amongst other passengers and 2 of possible crew cases.

The risk of onboard transmission is low

- Cabin characteristics:
 - Face to face interaction limited
 - Seat backs provide physical barrier between rows
 - Little mixing when sitting still

The risk of onboard transmission is low

- Passenger behavior:
 - People are avoiding travelling when unwell
 - Avoiding touch contact
 - Practicing cough etiquette and hand hygiene

The risk of onboard transmission is low

- Air flow characteristics on board may minimize droplet spread:
 - High flow rates - no stagnant air
 - Very little fore-aft flow
 - Air supply highly filtered

Risks can be further reduced through layered approach

- Reduce risk of **people traveling while unwell** with screening (temperature etc)
- **Minimize close contact** at all stages of the journey
 - Contactless check-in and baggage processes
 - Physical distancing throughout the airport process
 - Meticulous hand hygiene
 - Enhanced cleaning procedures
 - Masks / face coverings
- Parallel protections relating to crew members

Normal seat allocation can be maintained

- Implement in-flight measures, including
 - Limiting movement within the cabin during the flight
 - Mandatory wearing of masks or face coverings on board
 - Simplified catering procedures limiting movement and interaction

Thank you

www.iata.org/en/programs/safety/health/diseases/#tab-1

