

Guidelines for Air Travel During COVID-19

While the Center for Disease Control and Prevention advises that most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, air travel does involve risk of exposure because it is likely to bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces at various points during your journey.

The following guidelines can help minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 during your journey.

Before leaving home

- Read the [CDC's guidelines](#) on how to take precautions during travel.
- Check-in online and use a mobile boarding pass to make your journey as touchless as possible.
- Select a seat that minimizes physical interaction. Aisle seats mean you are more likely to come into contact with other passengers.
- Buy and wear face masks* and gloves (ideally reusable to minimize waste and take a spare) and have enough hand sanitizers and wipes to use throughout your journey. US airports now allow 12oz hand sanitizers in carry-on bags, and some other countries have followed suit.
- Research your journeys to and from the airport at each end including transportation to the airport and layovers.
- Leave enough time for potential airport delays due to new procedures and physical distancing measures.
- Eat before you go and pack plenty of snacks – many airports are not yet operating fully and meal offerings on planes may be limited.
- Bring your own refillable water bottle – it is better for the environment too.
- Many airlines are introducing temperature checks. Avoid travel if you feel at all unwell (a high temperature could mean you may not be allowed to board).

During your journey

- Stay six feet apart from other people whenever you can.
- Follow official health advice, including regularly washing your hands for 20 seconds, using a hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol and avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Use as few bins as possible at the security checkpoints to avoid delays.
- Due to reduced airline traffic, many airport shops and restaurants have been shuttered and it is best to avoid airport shops in general– bring your own supplies instead.
- Use the bathroom before you board. You are more likely to touch things in a tiny airline bathroom, plus you will have to walk past other passengers in a confined space. Also, on some shorter domestic flights, the onboard toilets might not be open at all.
- Try to touch as few surfaces as possible and feel free to wipe them down with disinfecting wipes, especially around your own seat on the plane including the tray table, arm rests, and screen.

- Keep up the hand washing and stay in your seat as much as possible.
- Follow the crew's instructions, including for wearing face masks* – these are now compulsory on most airlines.

On the road

- If your family or friends are planning to rent a car in order to bring you to the airport, ask the rental company for their cleanliness policy before booking. Feel free to ask if your car has been properly disinfected when it is picked up.
- SIT staff and faculty will inform you of any relevant hotel check-in procedures during orientation and/or upon arrival. Some hotels have introduced temperature checks for guests, as well as registration before you arrive to minimize contact.
- The situation at home and in your destination could change quickly, so check local news sources regularly and follow local public health advice.
- If you become unwell during your trip, contact your academic director. Stay inside, avoid contact with other people, follow official hygiene advice, and postpone further travel until you have recovered.

Returning home

- Repeat the steps mentioned above.
- Make a note of any issues or concerns during your journey, and make sure to feed those back to your program.
- If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 or have had contact with a person showing symptoms, always follow official health advice.

A well-planned trip will help protect both you and those around you. We wish you a safe and comfortable journey!

*Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others. Masks help reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 both by close contact and by airborne transmission. Masks must have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric. Do not wear masks intended for healthcare workers (e.g. N95 respirators) or face shields alone (evaluation of the effectiveness of face shields is ongoing but is unknown at this time).

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