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Guidance

# Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer air travel for passengers

How to travel safely in airports and on aircraft during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

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From:

Department for Transport (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport>)

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### COVID-19 exceptional travel advisory notice

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([FCO](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-and-commonwealth-office)) currently advises British nationals against all but essential international travel (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>). This advice is being kept under constant review.

## Travel safely during the coronavirus outbreak

You can help control coronavirus (COVID-19) and travel safely by:

- avoiding the busiest times and routes

- keeping your distance when your travel (2 metres apart where possible)
- washing or sanitising your hands regularly

You should not travel if you:

- are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms>) or have in the last 7 days
- are self-isolating as a result of coronavirus symptoms
- are sharing a household or support bubble with somebody who has experienced coronavirus symptoms in the last 14 days (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>)
- have been advised by the [NHS](#) test and trace service (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>) that you must self-isolate

If anyone in your household or support bubble (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#gatherings-public-spaces-and-outdoor-activities>) has symptoms of coronavirus you should self-isolate.

## Social distancing

The risk of transmission increases the closer you are to another person with coronavirus and the longer you spend in close contact. Wherever possible and practical, you should:

- keep 2 metres away from people outside your household or support bubble
- minimise the time you spend near other people

## Hand washing

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission. You should:

- wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, particularly after touching surfaces, for example luggage trolley handles, self-service check-in and security trays
- use hand sanitiser if hand washing facilities are not available
- be aware of the surfaces you touch
- be careful not to touch your face, mouth or eyes
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing

## Face coverings

You must wear a face covering (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-safe-outside-your-home/staying-safe-outside-your-home#face-coverings>) on board an airline service in England and Scotland.

If you can, you should wear a face covering in the airport, and in Scotland you must wear one (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-2-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings>).

Some people don't have to wear a face covering, for health, age or equality reasons.

Read more about:

- people who don't have to wear a face covering in England (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#exemptions-face-coverings>)
- people who don't have to wear a face covering in Scotland (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-2-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings>)

You should remove your face covering if asked to do so by police, border control or airport security.

It is important to use face coverings properly (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>). Wash or sanitise your hands before putting them on and after taking them off. Store face coverings hygienically when not in use.

You should bring your own face covering for use throughout your journey. Bring spare face coverings for longer journeys. Also bring plastic bags to store used face coverings.

Some international destinations may require different face coverings or masks to the [UK](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>).

## Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

There are different rules for wearing face coverings in:

- Northern Ireland (<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-information-public#face-coverings>)
- Scotland (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-2-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings>)
- Wales (<http://www.gov.wales/face-coverings-coronavirus>)

## Before you fly

Before booking a flight, understand the public health requirements of your destination country, restrictions on re-entering the [UK](https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control) (<https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>) and read the following guidance:

- Essential international travel guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-essential-international-travel-guidance>)
- Foreign travel advice for each country (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>)
- Guidance for British citizens travelling abroad (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>)

Where possible, your airline will inform you on measures to minimise transmission of coronavirus.

In line with other medical conditions, airlines have the right to refuse travel to anyone they believe is not fit to fly.

## Online check-in

Where possible, check-in online to avoid face-to-face contact at the airport.

You are strongly encouraged to check in baggage to the aircraft hold and minimise any hand baggage. This will speed up boarding and disembarking and minimise the risk of transmission.

Follow the safer travel guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#public-transport>) during your journey to the airport.

## Arriving at the airport

Enter the airport on your own, unless you are flying with members of your household or support bubble (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do#gatherings-public-spaces-and-outdoor-activities>). Non-passengers should only enter the airport where needed. For example, accompanying or picking up a passenger requiring assistance, such as a disabled person or an unaccompanied child.

You should wear a face covering in the airport, and in Scotland you must wear one (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-2-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings>).

Treat staff and other passengers with respect.

Follow instructions from airport and airline staff, which may include:

- where to sit
- how to queue at check-in, security or when boarding the aircraft
- instructions on screens, barriers or floor markings
- requests to move to less busy areas

## At check-in

Where possible, avoid touching surfaces in the airport. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds after using self-service check-in, luggage trolleys and other frequently touched surfaces.

Depending on the airport you fly from and where you are flying to, you may need to have your temperature checked before flying.

## At the security checkpoint

Follow advice in the airport to prepare for security checks.

## At the departure lounge/ terminal airside area/ arrival areas

Avoid walking around the airport and mixing with people that you do not normally meet.

In shops at the airport, follow social distancing measures and, where possible, pay by contactless card.

## On board the aircraft

The UK has a wide range of aircraft flying to many different international and domestic destinations. Measures to control coronavirus transmission will depend on:

- the technical features of your aircraft
- any specific requirements of your destination
- the individual risk controls identified by your airline

Your airline will advise you on measures in place for your flight.

In England and Scotland passengers must wear a face covering on board aircraft.

You can remove your face covering to:

- communicate with someone who relies on lip reading

- avoid harm or injury
- take medication
- eat or drink, if reasonably necessary

During the flight, you should:

- remain seated as much as possible
- follow instructions and guidance from crew
- use contactless payment where possible
- be aware there is likely to be a reduced food and drink service
- make the cabin crew aware if you become ill

## On arrival in the UK

On arriving in the UK, you must comply with border, immigration and self-isolation requirements (<https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>).

If you are entering the UK from outside the Common Travel Area (CTA)

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-travel-area-guidance/common-travel-area-guidance>) you will need to:

- provide journey and contact details before travelling to the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk>)
- self-isolate

These measures apply to anyone entering the UK, regardless of nationality or length of trip. There are specific exemptions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules>) in place.

Leave the airport as quickly as possible. Access to the terminal is limited to passengers, crew members and staff.

Non-passengers should only enter the airport where needed, for example when accompanying or picking up a passenger requiring assistance or unaccompanied children.

## Safer air travel infographic

### Safer air travel infographic

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/893135/coronavirus-air-passenger-guidance-poster.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/893135/coronavirus-air-passenger-guidance-poster.pdf))

[PDF](#), 129KB, 1 page

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1. 22 June 2020  
Changes to face covering rules in Scotland.
2. 15 June 2020  
Updated to reflect the new requirement for passengers to wear face coverings on aircraft in England.
3. 11 June 2020

First published.

## Related content

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer aviation guidance for operators (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-aviation-guidance-for-operators>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for the freight transport industry (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-freight-transport>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): transport and travel guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-transport-and-travel-guidance>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): requirements to provide public health information to passengers travelling to England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-requirements-to-provide-public-health-information-to-passengers-travelling-to-england>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): General Aviation (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-recreational-general-aviation>)

## Detailed guidance

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer aviation guidance for operators (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-aviation-guidance-for-operators>)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>)

## Collection

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): transport and travel guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-transport-and-travel-guidance>)

## Explore the topic

- Aviation passenger experience (<https://www.gov.uk/transport/aviation-passenger-experience>)
- Driving and transport in the UK during coronavirus (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/driving-and-transport-in-the-uk>)
- International travel, immigration and repatriation during coronavirus (<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-taxon/international-travel-immigration-repatriation>)