FAQs for International Passengers

PRE-DEPARTURE TESTING

Q: When does the pre-departure testing requirement commence?

A: Passengers travelling to Australia on flights departing **on or after 22 January 2021** (local time at departure point) will be required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result at the time of check-in. Some airlines already have pre-departure testing requirements in place. You should contact your airline to confirm requirements if you are flying earlier than 22 January 2021.

Q: What type of pre-departure test do I need to have prior to boarding my flight?

A: At the time of boarding, you will need to provide proof of a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result that has been provided by a laboratory. This test must be conducted 72 hours or less prior to the scheduled departure time of your flight (or first flight if you have one or more connecting flights booked for your travel to Australia).

Q: What information must be included in my laboratory test result record? Does it need to be paper-based or can it be electronic?

A: The following information should be included in English on your test result record:

- Traveller name and date of birth
- The test result (such as 'negative' or 'not detected')
- The method of test conducted e.g. PCR test
- The date the specimen was collected
- The date the test result was authorised and the name of the authorising officer
- Name and address of the laboratory / clinic / facility that administered the test
- Accreditation body that the laboratory is affiliated with, if known

If your test result record does not provide this information you may be prevented from boarding the aircraft. Please ensure this information will be provided to you by your testing facility when you get tested.

A paper-based record is preferred, however electronic records (such as a document embedded in an email or text message) that contains the required information would be accepted.

Q: Do children or people with other medical conditions need a pre-departure test?

A: Children who are four years of age or younger at the time of boarding are not required to have a test. Other vulnerable groups may be considered for exemption from a pre-departure test. This will be determined by the Australian Government.

Q: What if I don't get my test result before check in time?

A: When booking your test you should ask testing staff when the results should be available and ensure that the time is before your scheduled departure date. If you do not have evidence of a negative COVID-19 test result, you may be denied boarding.

Q: My test result is positive – what happens now?

A: You should **not** go to the airport as you may be prevented from boarding the aircraft by your airline. All other passengers in your travelling group should not travel. It is possible that you have passed on the infection to them. You should place yourself and your close contacts in isolation and seek advice from your local health authority.

Q: How do I arrange a COVID-19 test? What if PCR testing is not available in the country I am in?

A: You should contact the local health authority of the country that you are in for information about COVID-19 testing locations and booking arrangements (if available). Most health authorities advertise COVID-19 testing locations on their websites. If PCR testing is not available in the country that you are in, proof of a negative result from a Loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) test or rapid viral antigen test should be sort. If none of these testing methods are available, you may require an exemption.

Q: PCR testing is available in the country that I am in, however laboratories are overwhelmed and results are taking a very long time, what should I do?

A: You should contact the local health authority of the country that you are in for information about COVID-19 testing locations for the purpose of international travel, as some providers may prioritise such requests. Most health authorities advertise COVID-19 testing locations on their websites.

Q: How much does testing cost?

A: The cost of testing will vary depending on the country you are being tested in. Please note, some government funded testing facilities may not provide testing or testing certificates for the purpose of international travel. You should confirm that this service is available at the time of booking the test.

Q: A person in my travelling group has tested positive, but I and others in our group are negative. Can we still board?

A: No, your whole travelling group (people who you have shared a household with in the last 72 hours) are considered close contacts of the positive case, and will need to isolate immediately upon receiving the result. This is because you are at high risk of infection, having been in direct contact with a confirmed case. You should **not** go to the airport.

Q: I am travelling to Australia from New Zealand on a 'green zone' flight. Am I still required to have a test and wear a mask during the flight?

A: No, you are not required to have a pre-departure test. You are required to wear a mask during the flight and on-arrival at the airport to protect yourself and others.

Q: I have had a PCR COVID-19 test and have my result certificate however my flight has been re-scheduled outside of the 72 hour window. What should I do?

A: You should have a test within 72 hours of the scheduled departure time. If your flight is delayed by more than 72 hours past the scheduled departure time, you will require a new test result.

Q: My final destination is not Australia – I am only transiting through. Am I still required to have a test?

A: Yes, transit passengers present the same risk as other passengers on the flight and are required to have a pre-departure test before arriving in Australia.

Q: Is the negative PCR test required 72 hours before boarding my first flight or before arrival in Australia?

A: The PCR test must be conducted no more than 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of your first flight.

Q: Do I still have to do 14 days quarantine if I return a negative test result?

A: Yes. You are still required to undertake 14 days mandatory quarantine on arrival in Australia. You may still be incubating a COVID-19 infection, and quarantine will minimise the risk to the community from the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Q: If I have to do quarantine anyway, and get tested during that time, what is the point of pre-departure testing?

A: It is possible that pre-departure testing will assist in preventing transmission of COVID-19 on-board the flight to Australia, and possibly reduce the number of cases detected in quarantine to levels that can be safely managed by health authorities.

Reducing case numbers also reduces the potential for quarantine workers to become infected and introduce the virus to the broader Australian community.

Q: Do I still need to have a pre-departure test if I have had a COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Yes. However, if you have had a COVID-19 vaccine you should carry your vaccination certificate with you while travelling.

Q: I have a serology (blood) test result record which indicates I have developed antibodies to COVID-19 as a result of a previous infection. Do I still need to get a PCR test?

A: Yes. There is still a lot of research required to understand how protective antibodies are and how long they last. Some people have been infected with COVID-19 more than once. You are still required to provide proof of a negative PCR test prior to departure.

Q: What if my test result is positive, however I have already had COVID-19 and recovered from it? What should I do?

A: You should **not** go to the airport. Any other passengers in your travelling group will also be prevented from boarding. You should place yourself and your close contacts in isolation and seek further medical advice.

MASKS

Q: When should I wear a mask?

A: Passengers travelling to Australia on flights departing **on or after 22 January 2021** (local time at departure point), you must wear a mask for the duration of your flight, and in Australian airports. You should also wear a mask in the airport before boarding your flight. State and territory legislation requires that individuals wear a mask in domestic airports and on domestic flights while in Australia. You should check state/territory requirements for your onward travel after completion of quarantine.

Q: Can I remove my mask to eat and drink?

A: Yes, you can remove your mask to eat and drink, and if directed to do so by an airline or government official for identification, emergency and safety or other purposes.

Q: Is a mask provided when I arrive at the airport? If not, where do I get the recommended cloth or surgical mask?

A: You should provide your own mask, and bring enough masks to last the duration of your journey. You should change your mask every four hours, or when your mask is wet. A cloth or surgical mask is acceptable.

Q: Do children or people with medical conditions have to wear a mask?

A: Masks are not required for:

- Children aged under 12 years (11 years and younger) at the time of boarding, as they may not be able to handle it safely
- Anyone who has trouble breathing wearing a mask and who can provide a medical certificate as evidence
- Anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance
- People assisting people who are deaf or hard of hearing (and their contacts), as for some people with hearing disabilities seeing the mouth is essential for communication

Q: Where can I find advice on appropriate mask use?

A: The Department of Health [website](#) has a range of resources to assist in using the right mask for your circumstances, and using it safely.