



FAQs for International Travellers

PRE-DEPARTURE TESTING

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

A: All people travelling to Australia on flights departing **on or after 22 January 2021** (local time at departure point) must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) 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 check-in, you will need to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 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: Are there any exemptions from the pre-departure testing requirements?

A: Yes. The exemptions from the pre-departure testing requirements are outlined below:

Pre-departure testing exemptions	
(1)	Children who are four years of age or younger
(2)	People with a medical condition (who can provide a medical certificate)
(3)	International air crew
(4)	'Green zone' travellers
(5)	People travelling from countries where COVID-19 PCR testing is not reasonably available. Exemptions for this purpose will be determined by Australia's Director of Human Biosecurity

- (1) Children who are four years of age or younger at the time of check-in are not required to have a test or present evidence of a negative test result.
- (2) People that present a medical certificate which indicates that due to a medical condition they are unable to undergo a COVID-19 PCR test. The medical certificate must include the following information:
 - Your name (this must match your travel identification documents)
 - Date of medical consultation and details of your medical practitioner
 - Details that clearly acknowledge that you cannot undergo a COVID-19 PCR test or any other COVID-19 test due to a medical condition
- (3) International air crew are subject to state and territory surveillance testing requirements, which may include a test on arrival or every 7 days in Australia.
- (4) Travellers departing from a designated 'green zone' country are exempt from pre-departure testing.

(5) People travelling from a country where PCR testing is not reasonably available. Exemptions for this purpose will be determined by the Director of Human Biosecurity, who is Australia's Chief Medical Officer.

Q: Which countries / jurisdictions are exempt from the PCR pre-departure testing requirement?

A: Countries / jurisdictions designated as 'green zone' by the Australian Government. As at 19 January 2021, New Zealand is the only designated 'green zone' country. Further to this, countries / jurisdictions where PCR testing is not reasonably available (determined by Australia's Director of Human Biosecurity) are also exempt. These countries / jurisdictions are listed below.

Countries / jurisdictions exempt from the PCR pre-departure testing requirement*	
New Zealand (designated 'green zone' country)	
Kiribati	
Niue	
Samoa	
Solomon Islands	
Tokelau	
Tonga	
Tuvalu	
Vanuatu	

* This list remains under review and may be updated as local circumstances change

Q: PCR testing is available in the country / jurisdiction that I am in, however it is very difficult to access and results take a couple of days to be returned. Can the 72-hour timeframe be extended for countries / jurisdictions with continued limited capacity?

A: The Australian Government is continuing to monitor PCR testing capacity in countries / jurisdictions where travellers are likely to depart from. Travellers departing from the countries / jurisdictions listed below may provide evidence of a negative PCR test result, where the test was conducted 96-hours or less, prior to their scheduled flight departure.

Countries where a negative PCR test may be accepted, where the test was conducted 96-hours or less, prior to the scheduled flight departure*	
Cook Islands	Nauru
Federated States of Micronesia	Palau
French Polynesia	Timor Leste
Marshall Islands	

* This list remains under review and may be updated as local circumstances change

Q: I am a foreign diplomat travelling to Australia, am I required to meet the pre-departure testing requirements?

A: Yes. Foreign diplomats are required to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test result at the time of check-in.

Q: PCR testing is available in the country / jurisdiction that I am in and results are usually available within a day, 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: 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 must be included in English on your test result record:

Mandatory required information:

-
- 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 and time the test was conducted (i.e. the date the respiratory sample was collected)

Additional information requested, if available

- The date and time the test result was authorised and the name of the laboratory 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 include the four mandatory fields outlined above you will be prevented from checking-in and 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.

Important: Hold on to your testing result certificate for your entire travelling journey, as you may be required to present it more than once. It is recommended that you take a photo of it, if paper based.

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

A: Yes, you still need to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 PCR test result. If you have had a COVID-19 vaccine you should also 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. 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. There is still a lot of research required to understand how protective antibodies are and how long they last

Q: How do I arrange a COVID-19 test?

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.

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 will be denied boarding.

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. Will we be allowed to check-in and board the flight?

A: If you are a primary close contact of the traveller that has tested positive to COVID-19, you will not be allowed to check-in and board the aircraft. A primary close contact is anyone who has had unprotected exposure to a confirmed case. If you are a primary close contact, you will need to isolate immediately upon being notified that someone in your travelling group has received a positive COVID-19 test result. This is because you are at high risk of infection, having been in direct contact with them. 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 no more than 72 hours prior to the scheduled departure time of your flight. 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 no more than 72 hours before boarding my 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 flight (or first flight if you have one or more connecting flights booked for your travel to Australia).

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: My test result is positive – what happens now?

A: You should **not** go to the airport as you may be prevented from checking-in boarding the aircraft by your airline. You may also have primary close contacts in your travelling group, these people should not travel. It is possible that you have passed the infection on to them. A primary close contact is anyone who has had unprotected exposure to a confirmed case. You and your primary close contacts should immediately isolate and seek advice from your local health authority.

Q: My test result is “inconclusive” what should I do?

An inconclusive test result will be treated the same as a positive test result. You, and all primary close contacts within your travelling group will not be able to fly. A primary close contact is anyone who has had unprotected exposure to a confirmed case. You and your primary close contacts should isolate immediately and seek advice from your local health authority.

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 travellers 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. You will only be able to travel if you provide clearance documentation from a medical provider which clearly documents that:

- at least 14 days have passed since the onset of symptoms or initial positive PCR if asymptomatic; and
- there has been clinical resolution of fever and respiratory symptoms of the acute illness for the previous 72 hours

For your medical practitioner: Australia’s policy on clearance of a confirmed COVID-19 case from isolation may be found at: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm>.

MASKS

Q: When should I wear a mask?

A: People travelling to Australia on flights departing **on or after 22 January 2021** (local time at departure point), 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. You should wash your hands or perform hand hygiene after removing your mask and replace it with a fresh mask after your refreshments. You should perform hand hygiene again after re-applying your mask.

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: Are there any exemptions from the mask wearing requirements?

A: Yes. Masks are not required for:

- Children aged under 12 years (11 years and younger) at the time of boarding.
- Anyone who has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask and who can provide a medical certificate as evidence. The medical certificate must include the following information:
 - Your name (this must match your travel identification documents)
 - Date of medical consultation and details of your medical practitioner
 - Details that clearly acknowledge that you cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition
- 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.

Further information: If your question has not been addressed by these Questions and Answers, you may contact the Australian Government Department of Health at safeairtravel@health.gov.au. An immediate response is not guaranteed and may take up to 24 hours.