



# COVID-19

## UPDATE

Travel requirements to enter the United States are changing, starting November 8, 2021. More information is available [here](#).

## Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Documentation of Recovery from COVID-19

Required for all air passengers two years of age or older boarding a flight from a foreign country to the United States

Updated Oct. 25, 2021

[Print](#)

### What You Need to Know

- **If you plan to travel internationally**, you will need to get a COVID-19 viral test (regardless of vaccination status) before you travel by air into the United States. You must show your negative result to the airline before you board your flight.
  - **Fully vaccinated:** The viral test must be conducted on a sample taken no more than **3 days** before the flight's departure from a foreign country if you show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
  - **Not fully vaccinated:** The viral test must be conducted on a sample taken no more than **1 day** before the flight's departure from a foreign country if you do not show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- If you recently recovered from COVID-19, you may instead travel with documentation of recovery from COVID-19 (i.e., your positive COVID-19 viral test result on a sample taken no more than 90 days before the flight's departure from a foreign country **and** a letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel).

### Are You Fully Vaccinated for Air Travel to the United States?

You are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks (14 days) after your dose of an accepted single-dose COVID-19 vaccine; or
- 2 weeks (14 days) after your second dose of an accepted 2-dose series COVID-19 vaccine; or
- 2 weeks (14 days) after you received the full series of an active (not placebo) COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S.-based AstraZeneca or Novavax COVID-19 vaccine trials; or
- 2 weeks (14 days) after you received 2 doses of any "mix-and-match" combination of [accepted COVID-19 vaccines](#) administered at least 17 days apart.\*

If you don't meet these requirements, you are NOT fully vaccinated.

\* CDC has not recommended the use of mix-and-match COVID-19 vaccine primary series. However, such strategies are increasingly common in many countries outside of the United States. Therefore, for the purpose of interpreting vaccination records for travel to the United States, CDC will accept combinations of [accepted COVID-19 vaccines](#).

See [Requirement for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination for Air Passengers](#) for more information about necessary vaccination documentation.

## COVID-19 Testing Requirement for International Travel to the United States

On October 25, 2021 CDC amended its January 25, 2021 Order, titled, "*Requirement for Proof of Negative COVID-19 Test or Recovery from COVID-19 for All Air Passengers Arriving in the United States*." This amendment updates COVID-19 testing requirements for air passengers 2 years or older boarding a flight to the United States, depending on COVID-19 vaccination status.

**Effective November 8, 2021 at 12:01am EST (5:01am GMT)**, before boarding a flight to the US from a foreign country, all air passengers- 2 years or older – are required to present a negative COVID-19 viral test result, within a time period based on their vaccination status (see table below), or present documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days. Air passengers will also be required to confirm in the form of an attestation that the information they present is true.

### Time Period for Testing for Air Passengers to Obtain a Negative COVID-19 Viral Test

Type of Air Passenger (2 years or older)	Number of Days to get a COVID-19 Viral Test Before a Flight's Departure to the US
<a href="#">Fully vaccinated</a>	No more than 3 days
Not fully vaccinated	No more than 1 day

For the full list of requirements and exemptions, please review the language in the [Order](#).

International travel poses additional risks and even fully vaccinated travelers are at increased risk for getting and possibly spreading new COVID-19 variants.

CDC recommends delaying international travel until you are fully vaccinated.

- [Requirement for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination For Air Passengers](#)
- [Travel Assessment](#)
- [International Travel Information for U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, Lawful Permanent Residents and Immigrants](#)
- [Non-U.S. citizen, Non-U.S. immigrants: Air Travel to the United States](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions


### Overview

Does this requirement apply to US citizens?



Yes, this Order applies to all air passengers 2 years or older traveling into the US, including US citizens and lawful

permanent residents (Green Card holders) unless exempted.

What if I have had a COVID-19 vaccine or have tested positive for antibodies? Do I still need a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of recovery from COVID-19? 

Yes, at this time all air passengers, 2 years or older, traveling to the US, regardless of vaccination or antibody status, are required to provide a negative COVID-19 viral test result or documentation of recovery unless exempted.

Does this Order apply to land border crossings or persons arriving at seaports? 

No, the requirements of this Order only apply to air travel into the U.S.

Are US territories considered foreign countries for the purposes of this Order? 

No, the requirement to present a negative result of a COVID-19 viral test or documentation recovery from COVID-19 does not apply to air passengers with flights from a US territory to a US state.

U.S. territories include American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Do the requirements of this Order apply to diplomats and special visa holders? 

Diplomats and special visa holders are not exempt from this Order.

Do state and local governments in the US have separate testing requirements for air passengers? 

Federal testing requirements must be met to board a plane to the US. Some state and local governments may have similar or more restrictive testing requirements for air passengers arriving in their jurisdictions. Always check and follow [state and local](#) recommendations or requirements related to travel in addition to federal requirements.

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## Test and Vaccination Documentation Requirements

What types of SARS-CoV-2 test are acceptable under the Order? 

You must be tested with a [viral test](#) that could be either an antigen test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT). Examples of available NAATs for SARS-CoV-2 include but are not restricted to reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification (RT-LAMP), transcription-mediated amplification (TMA), nicking enzyme amplification reaction (NEAR), and helicase-dependent amplification (HDA). The test used must be authorized for use by the relevant national authority for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 in the country where the test is administered. A viral test conducted for U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) personnel, including DOD contractors, dependents, and other U.S. government employees, and tested by a DOD laboratory located in a foreign country also meets the requirements of the Order.

Can I get a rapid test? 

Rapid tests are acceptable if they are a viral test that meet the requirements under the Order.

## Does a self-test meet the conditions of the Order?

**You** can use a self-test (sometimes referred to as home test) that meets the following criteria:

- The test must be a SARS-CoV-2 viral test (nucleic acid amplification test [NAAT] or antigen test) with Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- The testing procedure must include a telehealth service affiliated with the manufacturer of the test that provides real-time supervision remotely through an audio and video connection. Some FDA-authorized self-tests that include a telehealth service may require a prescription.
- The telehealth provider must confirm your identity, observe the sample collection and testing procedures, confirm the test result, and issue a report that meets the requirements of CDC's Order (see "What information must be included in the test result?" below).
- Airlines and other aircraft operators must be able to review and confirm your identity and the test result details. You must also be able to present the documentation of test results to U.S. officials at the port of entry and local/state health departments, if requested.

Some countries may restrict importation of tests that are not authorized or registered there. If you are considering bringing a U.S.-authorized test with you for use outside of the United States, contact authorities at your destination for information before you travel.

## What information must be included on the test result?

A test result must be in the form of written documentation (paper or digital copy). The documentation must include:

1. Type of test (indicating it is a NAAT or antigen test)
2. Entity issuing the result (e.g., laboratory, healthcare entity, or telehealth service)
3. Sample collection date
  - A negative test result must show the sample was taken no more than 3 days before the flight for air passengers who have proof of being fully vaccinated, or no more than 1 day before the flight if the air passenger is not fully vaccinated.
  - A positive test result for documentation of recovery from COVID-19 must show the sample was taken within the 90 days before the flight.
4. Information that identifies the person (full name plus at least one other identifier such as date of birth or passport number)
5. Test result

Before boarding a flight to the U.S., you will need to show a paper or digital copy of your test result for review by the airline and for review upon request by public health officials after you arrive in the U.S.

## What kind of documentation is needed to show proof of being fully vaccinated?

See [Requirement for Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination for Air Passengers](#) for information about necessary vaccination documentation.

## What if I recently recovered from COVID-19?

People who have recovered from COVID-19 can continue to test positive for up to 3 months after their infection. CDC

does not recommend retesting within 3 months after a person with COVID-19 first [developed symptoms of COVID-19](#) (or the date their sample was taken for their first positive viral diagnostic test if their infection was asymptomatic).

If you have had a positive viral test on a sample taken during the past 90 days, and you have [met the criteria to end isolation](#), you may travel instead with your positive viral test results and a signed letter from a licensed healthcare provider or a public health official that states you have been cleared for travel. The positive test result and letter together are referred to as “documentation of recovery.”

A letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official that clears you to end isolation, e.g., to return to work or school, can be used to show you are cleared to travel, even if travel isn’t specifically mentioned in the letter. The letter must have information that identifies you personally (e.g., name and date of birth) that matches the personal identifiers on your passport or other travel documents. The letter must be signed and dated on official letterhead that contains the name, address, and phone number of the healthcare provider or public health official who signed the letter.

If you have recovered from COVID-19 but are not able to obtain documentation of recovery that fulfills the requirements, you will need to show a negative COVID-19 viral test result from a sample taken no more than 3 days (or 1 day if you are not fully vaccinated) before your flight to the US departs.

Even if you have recovered from COVID-19, if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 you should [isolate](#), not travel, and consult with a healthcare provider for testing recommendations.

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### Does a negative test result, documentation of recovery, or proof of vaccination need to be in English?

Airlines and other aircraft operators must be able to confirm the test result and proof of vaccination and review other required information and should determine when translation is necessary for these purposes. If your documents are in a language other than English, you should check with your airline or aircraft operator before travel.

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### What is an attestation?

An attestation is a statement, writing, entry, or other representation under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 that confirms that the information provided is true. Willingly providing false or misleading information may lead to fines and other criminal penalties.

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### Should I retain proof of a negative test or documentation of recovery and a copy of my attestation?

You are required to retain a paper or digital copy of your negative test result or documentation of recovery for the entirety of your itinerary as federal public health officials may request to see these documents at the port of entry. State, territorial, tribal and/or local health departments in the United States may also request them under their own public health authorities.

The attestation should be submitted to and retained by the airline or aircraft operator.

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### Will CDC reimburse me for the cost of a COVID-19 test?

CDC is not able to reimburse you for COVID-19 testing fees. You may wish to contact your insurance provider or the location that provided your test about payment options.

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# Timing Requirements

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## When do I need to get a test to travel to the US?

If you are fully vaccinated and traveling with proof of vaccination, you must get tested no more than 3 days before your flight to the U.S. departs. If you are not fully vaccinated and 2 years and older, you must get tested no more than 1 day before your flight to the US departs.

## Why do people who are not fully vaccinated have 1 day rather than 3 days before the flight's departure to be tested?

Recent CDC modeling shows that for travelers who are not fully vaccinated, getting a viral test 1 day prior to departure can substantially reduce the chance of traveling with COVID-19. Testing 1 day before departure for travelers who are not fully vaccinated reduces the risk of transmission during travel and of importing additional COVID-19 cases into the US. For travelers who are fully vaccinated, the combination of vaccination and pre-travel testing provides a greater level of public health protection than either measure alone and is consistent with a layered strategy.

## Why does the Order specify 1 day and 3 days rather than 24 hours and 72 hours? What is considered 1 day and 3 days?

The 1-day period is 1 day before the flight's departure and the 3-day period is the 3 days before the flight's departure. The Order uses 1-day and 3-day time frames instead of 24 hours and 72 hours to provide more flexibility to the air passenger and aircraft operator. By using a 1-day and 3-day window, test acceptability does not depend on the time of the flight or the time of day that the test sample was taken.

For example, if you are fully vaccinated and your flight is at 1pm on a Friday, you could board with a negative test that was taken any time on the prior Tuesday or after. If you are not fully vaccinated and your flight is at 1pm on a Friday, you could board with a negative test that was taken any time on the prior Thursday.

## What if my child under 18 is not fully vaccinated but I am? Do they still have to get a test no more than 1-day before a flight's departure to the United States?


Children between the ages of 2 and 17 who are not fully vaccinated may board a flight to the United States with a negative pre-departure COVID-19 viral test conducted on a specimen collected no more than 3 days before departure (i.e., Qualifying Test for Fully Vaccinated) *if* traveling accompanied by fully vaccinated parents or guardians.

If traveling unaccompanied or if one or more of the parents or guardians accompanying the child is **not** fully vaccinated, the child must present a negative pre-departure COVID-19 viral test on a specimen collected no more than 1 day before departure. While children under 2 years of age are not required to get a test, CDC recommends a pre-departure test for these children whenever possible.


## Can a test taken before departure from the U.S. be used to return within the 1-day or 3-day time frame? How will testing requirements be handled for short trips?

If a trip is shorter than 1 day or 3 days, a viral test taken in the United States can be used to fulfill the requirements of the Order as long as the specimen was taken no more than 1 day or 3 days, depending on your vaccination status, before your return flight to the U.S. departs. If your return travel is delayed longer than 1 day or 3 days after the test, you will need to be retested before your return flight.

If you are considering this option, you should additionally consider, as a contingency when making your travel plans, the availability of testing capacity at your destination and the time frame needed to obtain results.

What if I am overseas and unable to find a testing site that has a turnaround time of 1-3 days and can't get tested before my flight? 

When making plans for travel, you should consider the availability of testing capacity at your destination and the time frame needed to obtain results.

For more information on where to obtain a test overseas, you should review the relevant [U.S. Embassy website](#) .


You may consider contacting the airline regarding options for changing your departure date to allow time for a test, see if the airline has identified options for testing, or if there are options available for changing their flights to transit through a location where you can get tested before boarding your final flight to the United States.

What happens if I don't take a test and want to travel to the U.S.? 

Air passengers traveling to the US are required to present a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery. Airlines must confirm the negative test result or documentation of recovery for all passengers before boarding. If you choose not to present a test result or documentation of recovery, the airline must not allow you to board.

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## Positive Test or COVID-19 Exposure

What happens if I test positive? 

You should [self-isolate](#) and [delay](#) your travel if you develop symptoms or your pre-departure test result is positive until you have [recovered from COVID-19](#). Airlines must refuse to board anyone who does not present a negative test result for COVID-19 or documentation of recovery.

If I test positive for COVID-19, and then test negative, can I travel? 


If you know or suspect that you have COVID-19, you should self-isolate and [NOT travel](#) until you have met CDC's [criteria for discontinuing isolation](#).

What happens if I have a negative test, but my travel companion tests positive before our flight to the United States? 

If you are not fully vaccinated and have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 (i.e., who are considered exposed to COVID-19), you should self-quarantine and [NOT travel](#) until you have met [criteria for discontinuing quarantine](#). If you are [fully vaccinated](#), or have documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 90 days, you do not have to self-quarantine after exposure to a person with COVID-19 and can travel unless you have COVID-19 [symptoms](#).


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## Connecting or Delayed Flights


If I fly from a U.S. state or territory to another U.S. state or territory, but have to connect through a foreign country, am I still required to get a test? 

If you booked an itinerary from a U.S. state or territory to another U.S. state or territory and the itinerary has you taking a connecting flight through a foreign country, CDC does not require that you be tested. An example of this situation is an itinerary booked between the Northern Mariana Islands (a U.S. territory) and the U.S. mainland via Japan.

However, some U.S. [state and local](#) governments and foreign governments may have their own testing requirements for air passengers arriving in their jurisdictions that may differ from U.S. federal requirements. Always check and follow recommendations or requirements related to travel to your destination in addition to U.S. federal requirements.

If I am connecting through the U.S. to another country, do I still need to get tested? 


Yes. Any flight entering the U.S. from a foreign country, even for a connection, will require testing before departure.

If I have one or more connecting flights to get to the U.S., does the 1-day and 3-day period apply to the first flight or the last one? 

If your itinerary has you arriving to the US via one or more connecting flights, your test can be taken within 1 day or 3 days, depending on your vaccination status, before the departure of the **first flight**.


You also have the **option of getting tested en route** during one of your connections. However, you should consider where in the connecting airport testing is available and if you would be able to access it while in transit. If you choose this strategy and are unable to get a test en route, you will not be able to board your flight to the United States. You should also be aware that if you test positive en route, you will not be allowed to continue your travel and may need to stay at that location until you end isolation.

Please note, if you planned an itinerary incorporating one or more overnight stays en route to the US, you will need to make sure your test is not expired before your flight that will enter the US. You do not need to be retested if the itinerary requires an overnight connection because of limitations in flight availability.

What happens if my flight is delayed past the 1-day or 3-day limit for testing? 

If the **first flight** in your trip is delayed past the 1-day or 3-day limit of testing due to a situation outside of your control (e.g., delays because of severe weather or aircraft mechanical problem), and that delay is **24 hours** or less past the 1-day or 3-day limit for testing, you do not need to be retested. If the delay is more than **24 hours** past the 1-day or 3-day limit, then you will need to be retested.

If a **connecting flight** in your trip is delayed past the 1-day or 3-day limit of testing due to a situation outside of your control (e.g., delays because of severe weather or aircraft mechanical problem), and that delay is less than **48 hours** past the 1-day or 3-day limit for testing, you do not need to be retested. If the delay is more than **48 hours** past the 1-day or 3-day limit, then you will need to be retested.

Can CDC help me get a refund for travel expenses if I have to cancel or delay travel because of testing requirements for air passengers flying to the U.S.? 

CDC does not reimburse and is unable to help travelers get reimbursements for travel expenses because of canceled or delayed travel due to COVID-19 or testing requirements for air passengers flying to the US. While some companies may base their policies on CDC's travel recommendations or requirements, each company establishes its own refund



base their policies on CDC's travel recommendations or requirements, each company establishes its own return policies.

In some cases, trip cancellation insurance can protect your financial investment in a trip if you need to change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak. Visit CDC's [Travelers' Health website](#) if you would like to learn more about travel insurance, including trip cancellation insurance.

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## Exemptions

### Can I get an exemption to the testing requirement?

Exemptions may be granted on an extremely limited basis when emergency travel (like an emergency medical evacuation) must occur to preserve someone's life, health against a serious danger, or physical safety and testing cannot be completed before travel.

### Can I apply for a humanitarian exemption to the testing requirement?

CDC may grant a humanitarian exemption in limited circumstances only when an individual must travel to the United States to preserve health and safety (e.g., emergency medical evacuations) and is unable to access or complete the testing requirement before travel. Individuals applying for this exemption should contact the U.S. embassy or consulate in or nearest to the country from which they are departing for the United States. The embassy will then transmit this information to the CDC for consideration.

You can contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, or call these numbers at the U.S. Department of State headquarters: From the United States and Canada: 888-407-4747; from overseas: 202-501-4444.

CDC will provide additional information as to how to make this application.

### What if I have tested positive for COVID-19 and need medical evacuation to the United States?

Private flights or general aviation aircraft may transport a patient who has tested positive, or exposed contacts if they adhere to CDC's [Interim Guidance for Transporting or Arranging Transportation by Air into, from, or within the United States of People with COVID-19 or COVID-19 Exposure](#).