

# How to Avoid Getting Sick When Flying

These 7 easy tips can help you stay healthy during and after your next flight



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Drinking plenty of water throughout the flight can help fight against several of the most common in-flight nuisances.

Stress, **jet lag**, and **jet bloating** are all common nuisances we often have to deal with before, during, and after a flight. But besides these annoyances, many travelers also complain that flying, more than once, has "made them sick." If you are one of those people who have noticed that when getting off a plane you more often than not have a banging headache, or wake up the next day with a stuffy nose, you are not that much off track for thinking that the flight made you sick.

According to a study by the **Journal of Environmental Health Research**, colds are 100 times more likely to be transmitted on a



plane than during normal "everyday life" on the ground. The specific reason might be hard to pinpoint, as it probably is a combination of several things. But what seems like the most obvious reason — you are stuck in a confined space for few hours with several people breathing the same air, which basically gets "recycled" around the cabin — is, according to the study, actually not the main reason many come down with a cold after a flight. The reason turns out to be that the air inside an airplane is extremely dry, and the low humidity easily dehydrates passengers and lowers the natural defense system in their bodies.

Most commercial airlines fly as high as 30,000 to 35,000 feet, and humidity at this altitude is normally 10 percent or lower. The low level of humidity interferes with the protective system in our noses and throats, called the mucociliary clearance system. Low humidity causes the mucus to dry up, which then makes for a much

more hospitable environment for germs and bacteria, the study by the [Journal of Environmental Health Research](#) reports.

So what can you do to avoid getting sick when flying? We at The Daily Meal decided to compile a list of tips and ideas on how to stay healthy during and after a flight.

**Dr. Luis Navarro**, director of The Vein Treatment Center in New York City, says that one of the main things to remember is to stay hydrated. Not only is it important to stay hydrated to help keep



[Slideshow: How to Avoid Getting Sick When Flying \(Slideshow\)](#)

your nose and throat moist, but as the lack of oxygen in the air makes blood thicker, passengers are prone to another unwanted health issue: blood clots. Dr. Navarro recommends drinking plenty of fluid, and also to avoid caffeine — coffee or caffeinated soda drinks — as they tend to have a dehydrating effect on our bodies. He also advises to move around, especially during long flights, to keep your blood flowing and avoid the risk of blood clots, as well as to wear compression stockings.

Another main thing to help you from getting sick when flying is to remember your hygiene. Washing your hands or using hand sanitizer is always recommended, especially before meals. Also, respect your neighbor, and if you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and wash or disinfect your hands soon after.

So before you board a plane next time, [click through our slideshow](#) and learn seven easy tips that will help you stay healthy while flying, and hopefully avoid that post-flight sickness.