

Aerospace Medical Association

Medical Guidelines for Airline Travel

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Foreword

This is the Third Edition of Guidelines for the 'Medical Clearance of Airline Passengers'. Its purpose is to provide medical practitioners with a comprehensive and up-to-date guide to enable them to give the best advice to their traveling patients.

For the Third Edition, AsMA has modified its approach. While the publication will include most of the same chapters as published in the Second Edition, some chapters will refer directly to existing up-to-date external documents. To ensure the most up-to-date recommendations are included, AsMA has associated itself with recognized groups of subject matter experts including the American College of Emergency Physicians, British Thoracic Society, British Cardiac Society and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The publication will also become an on-line 'living' document which can be updated as and when new information becomes available. This approach will make it easier for AsMA to keep the document contemporary.

This new approach will provide an improved document as well as provide for more interaction between AsMA and medical specialists for the benefit of practitioners and travelers.

Introduction

Over three billion people travel each year by air on international flights alone and the numbers continue to increase. A global increase in travel, as well as a growing aged population in many countries, makes it reasonable to assume that an increased number of older passengers and passengers with illness will want to travel by air. Patients frequently ask their physicians whether or not it is advisable for them to travel, and if so, what precautions they should take.

Consequently, physicians need to be aware of the environmental and physiological stresses of flight in order to properly advise their patients. The information contained in this document is both for primary care and specialist physicians so they will be better prepared to advise patients who are contemplating air travel. (Note that the material applies only to passengers and not to flight deck or cabin crew, for whom specific requirements apply). Information provided should be viewed as a guide, not rigid criteria or hard and fast rules. As in all patient management, advice should be individualized and tempered by the physician's clinical judgment.