

# The Germs on a Plane—and How to Avoid Them



"The **airplane restroom** is the germiest you're going to come across. There's so much traffic and no one cleans them."

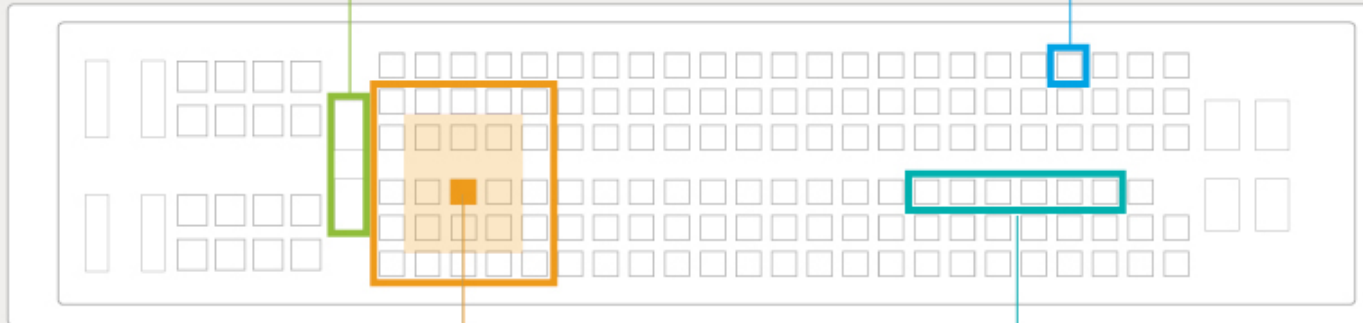
*Charles Gerba, U. of Arizona*

**Tip:** Use your own hand sanitizer—even after washing your hands.



Researchers have found influenza virus, norovirus, and MRSA on **airplane trays** they've examined.

**Tip:** Clean the tray with an alcohol-based hand wipe.



## the hot zone

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that there's a **two-seat radius** where you're more at risk of catching a cold.

Coach-cabin passengers had a **7.7%** greater risk of contracting H1N1 if they sat within two seats of an infected passenger.

**Tip:** If someone's visibly ill, try to change seats. If that's not possible, use the overhead vent to try and circulate air in front of your face.



"**Aisle seats** are germier than others because people touch those as they walk by."

*Charles Gerba, U. of Arizona*

**Tip:** Don't sit in the aisle.

Source: Daily Briefing interviews; McCartney, *Wall Street Journal*, 12/20/11; Gonzalez, *io9.com*, 11/26; Brown, *frommers.com*, accessed 11/25.



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Traveling can lead to increased risk of catching a cold, with worn-out travelers exposing each other to potential illnesses. And one of the most common spots for disease transmission? Aboard an airplane, warns the University of Arizona's Chuck Gerba.