

When can I fly after surgery?

It'll depend on the regulations of your airline and the nature of your surgery.

Check before you fly

Each airline has its own regulations about flying after surgery.

Check with your airline before you fly, particularly if you have had complicated surgery.

If you have had any kind of major surgery, you should also check with your surgeon or GP before flying.

Types of surgery

As a rough guide, the [Civil Aviation Authority \(CAA\)](#) says that before flying, you should allow:

- 1 day after simple cataract or corneal laser surgery
- 1 day after a [colonoscopy](#)
- 1 to 2 days after keyhole surgery
- 4 to 5 days after simple abdominal surgery
- 7 days after more complicated eye surgery
- 10 days after chest surgery or a [coronary artery bypass graft](#)
- 10 days after more complicated abdominal surgery

For other types of surgery, allow:

- 1 to 2 days after surgery where a plaster cast is applied – if you have a broken arm or leg, it'll affect where you can sit; for example, you won't be allowed to sit in an emergency seat and you may have to purchase an extra seat if you can't bend your knee to sit normally
- 2 to 6 weeks after surgery for [retinal detachment](#) that involves having a gas bubble put in your eye

Risk of DVT

If you're flying after recent surgery, especially on the hips or knees, you're at an increased risk of [deep vein thrombosis \(DVT\)](#), a blood clot in one of the deep veins in your body, usually in your legs.

Other factors may also increase your risk of DVT, including if you:

- have had DVT before
- have had blood clots already
- have a family history of blood clots

- are overweight or obese
- are pregnant

If you're at high risk of DVT, speak to your GP before flying.

They may get advice from your surgeon, for example, or recommend that you delay your trip.

You can take steps to reduce your risk of DVT, such as drinking plenty of water and moving around on the plane.

The risk of developing a travel-related DVT is low, even if you're classed as moderate to high risk.

Travelling with a pacemaker

People who have had a pacemaker or an implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD) fitted may travel without problems once they're medically stable.

Travel insurance

Check your travel insurance policy carefully, as you may need to inform the insurance company that you have recently had surgery.

This could increase the cost of your travel insurance.

Read the answers to more questions about [travel health](#).

Further information

- [Can I travel on a plane if I have a plaster cast?](#)
- [How can I have a healthy and comfortable flight?](#)
- [How long should I wear compression stockings after surgery?](#)
- [When can I fly again after a heart attack?](#)

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