



How can you keep those evil little bugs from getting at you in the sky? Just ask anyone who has flown from New York to London or similar hours-long air journey while squeezed into a five-across row of sardine-can sized seats. They'll know that Murphy's Law of inevitable germs too often kicks in for the haplessly trapped, formerly healthy flyer.

Worst scenarios: Seated on one side will be an old sneezer with a bad cold and big red nose that could easily guide Santa's sleigh. He'll spend the flight coughing, dripping and spritzing. Of course, he'll turn his head each time he explodes... right into your face. On your other side will be a harried young mother with a baby who coughs, drools and emits other bodily drippings, all also inevitably aimed at you. How can you avoid getting sick while trapped like a sardine in a disease-ridden flying sardine can?

If you're in the middle of a disease row of seats, the quickest way is to call a flight attendant over and ask to sit in another part of the cabin. If it isn't a full flight, you may get your wish and travel the rest of the way in relatively healthy comfort.

Another tip for fighting in-flight germs is to go aboard prepared. Eat very modestly, drink plenty of fluids and carry a small supply of over-the-counter cold remedies. Some people believe a shot or two of booze before boarding can do wonders in fending off the nasty little bugs.

If you tend to get air sick, bring appropriate pills. Wash your hands as often as possible, especially before and after handling food and using bathrooms. There are several take-along cleaning items, such as little bottles of alcohol-based hand cleaner and wet, sanitized towelets.

On many Asian city streets, and in air and train travel from that part of the world, people wear medical face masks. They filter out germs and other air impurities. That hasn't quite caught on in the U.S., but for travelers in crowded airplanes, trains and buses during months when colds and the flu are most prevalent, it's a good idea. Fellow passengers may sneer at you, but that's easier to take than when they sneeze at you.