



GERMAPHOBIA

Extreme hygiene measures for hotels and airlines will be vital to restoring public confidence, but older, more vulnerable generations will be wary

By Marisa Cannon

In 2019, supermodel Naomi Campbell published a video detailing the cleaning routine she undertakes every time she boards a plane, where she systematically disinfects everything from the armrests and in-flight entertainment control to the window. "I do not care what people think of me," she declared, wiping down the shell of her seat with a Dettol wipe.

In the age of Covid-19, Campbell's eccentric behaviour will be vindicated, and we'll all be following suit once the airways are open.

Following the example of Qantas, British Airways, Etihad and Delta, most airlines will be taking extreme measures to increase hygiene on board by using electrostatic spraying to kill germs and viruses in the cabin, for example, as well as handing out sanitising kits,

boarding via the back of the plane (from row one onwards), and removing in-flight magazines.

Emirates has banned all cabin baggage beyond briefcases, handbags laptops and baby items, and is mandating the use of gloves and masks, while also giving passengers blood tests at the airport to check for antibodies.

Etihad is trialling Elenium contactless kiosks that measure passengers' temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate, and Hong Kong and Tokyo airports are giving rapid Covid-19 tests to passengers arriving home from high-risk areas.

IATA has issued guidelines that state cabin crew should be dressed in full personal protective equipment (PPE), including plastic gowns over their uniforms, goggles, masks and gloves. The Civil Aviation Administration of China has even gone

so far as to recommend that crew wear disposable nappies to avoid potential infection through use of the lavatory.

In the longer term, expect cabins to incorporate new physical distancing designs, such as the new Janus seat from Aviointeriors, which features a double-S-shaped wraparound plastic barrier between passengers.

Hotels, meanwhile, will be looking to redefine the way they interact with guests in order to minimise touch points. The Four Seasons Hotel in New York City has started performing virtual check-in and check-outs, and has removed minibars, excess hangers and linens. It has also suspended restaurant, bar and room service for the foreseeable future.

Since March 2020, L'hotel Island South in Hong Kong has deployed AI robots to serve food



Adobe Stock

and drink to guests in quarantine, while Millennium Hotels and Resorts in Singapore is currently benefiting from early investment in delivery robots, which can call for an elevator, find the right room and contact guests on the phone.

Deep cleaning between stays will become the norm, with Accor, Radisson, Kempinski, Hilton and Marriott all launching initiatives to promote cleaning practices such as the use of hospital-grade

disinfectant and ultraviolet light technology to sanitise keys and mobile devices. (Globetrender also hopes pillows will be washed between stays.)

Increased hygiene concerns may well cause travellers to think twice about sharing economy platforms such as Airbnb and Uber, whose models are predicated on rentals that enjoy a vast number of prior users. Despite Airbnb's new hygiene guidelines for hosts and guests, holiday homes and the furnishings inside them

may now be considered potential vectors.

So too could beach deckchairs and umbrellas, and we might see the introduction of reservation systems and time slots for different age groups visiting the seaside. Italian plastics manufacturer Nuova Neon Group 2 has developed designs for 20 sqm plexiglass cubicles to separate beachgoers. "We've already received several inquiries from beach operators and restaurants," says owner Claudio Ferrari.