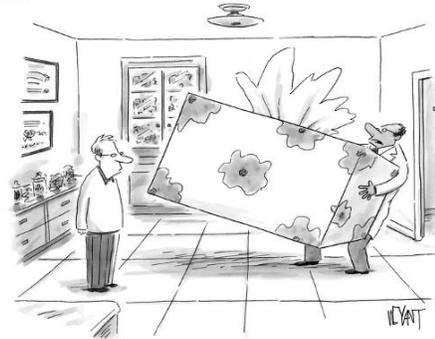


With vaccination rates approaching 70% in many Developed countries, the question is turning to *where will you need a Covid passport?* Proof of vaccination or recovery from infection is increasingly being demanded, not just for international travel, but also within countries.

Immunity passports are nothing new. The World Health Organization's International Certificate of Vaccination, commonly known as the Yellow Card, was first issued in 1951. It is still used today by travellers, who need to show that they have been vaccination against diseases from yellow fever or rubella. Some countries also require schoolchildren to be vaccinated against certain infectious diseases. Many countries now see both vaccines and documents proving who has had them, as essential to the safe reopening of economies after the pandemic. But what exactly is a Covid passport?



"We're out of flu shots."

Although the word "passport" implies that these documents will be required travel, most are likely to be used for domestic purposes. Dozens of countries now require digital health certificates for access to certain services. These passes are intended to make congregating safer and in some cases also to spur people to get jabbed. Many people see their use as a short-term inconvenience that will allow them more freedom, but critics argue that they threaten civil liberties.

French law will require a "health pass" be shown for access to most public spaces. Italy's Green Pass is now needed to enter the information sections of restaurants and bars as well as archaeological sites, gyms, theatres and indoor swimming pools. China has a QR code system on an app which categorizes people according to their health, and a new digital certificate that stores vaccination records. America's federal government says it has no plans to introduce a Covid app, which likely wouldn't work as the United States has no national health registry to support one. New York City plans to introduce a requirement for vaccines in many indoor venues, but at least 19 States have passed laws banning Covid passports. Israel's Green Pass was introduced in February 2021, phased out in June as cases fell, then reinstated in late July for large events (prompted by the spread of the Delta variant).



Travel is becoming easier for those who are vaccinated than those who are not. In many countries quarantine requirements for incoming travellers vary depending on immunity. A handful, including Anguilla and French Polynesia have made inoculation a condition of entry for tourists. Other countries, including France and Spain, insist that travellers arriving from certain places are vaccinated. When America fully reopens its borders, it is expected to demand that all foreigners are vaccinated (though not its own curiously). Such policies are likely to expand, but a lack of standardization makes proving one's status complicated. The EU's Digital Covid Certificate, or EUDCC, should ease travel for 446 million people within the bloc. But travellers from outside must hope that their own digital passports or paper certificates will be accepted. I carry with me my Covid confirmations showing I have been double vaccinated, though wonder whether these simple, black and white forms that contain no government stamp or secure link to Ontario's Ministry of Health, will be accepted proof of anything. What's more is that at present, governments cannot even agree on which vaccines are effective enough for international travel. Covid passports, like regular ones, must be trusted and readable anywhere and everywhere. Until a single system can be agreed on, their use will likely remain limited.

Be safe, be well!

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