



All information that has been compiled for your review has been taken from the *CDC Health Information for International Travel 2014*, also known as *The Yellow Book*.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *CDC Health Information for International Travel 2014*. New York: Oxford University Press; 2014

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/yellowbook-home-2014>

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Your Survival Guide to Safe and Healthy Travel

Every year more and more Americans are traveling internationally — for vacation, business, and volunteerism, and to visit friends and family. Whatever your reason for traveling, the information on this page will help you to be [Proactive](#), [Prepared](#), and [Protected](#) when it comes to your health—and the health of others—while you are traveling.

BE PROACTIVE!

Take steps to anticipate any issues that could arise during your trip. The information in this section will help you plan for a safe and healthy trip.

- [Learn about your destination.](#)
- [See a doctor before you travel.](#)
- [Think about your health status.](#)
 - Are you too sick to travel? (Recent illnesses, injuries, or surgeries)
 - Do you have any special health needs? (Babies and small children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, people with weakened immune systems)

BE PREPARED!

No one wants to think about getting sick or hurt during a trip, but sometimes these things happen. You may not be able to prevent every illness or injury, but you can plan ahead to be able to deal with them.

- [Pack smart.](#)
- [Plan ahead for illnesses or injuries during your trip.](#)
- [Know what to do if you become sick or injured on your trip.](#)
- [Know and share important information about your trip.](#)

BE PROTECTED!

It is important to practice healthy behaviors during your trip and after you return home. This section outlines how you can protect yourself and others from illness during your trip.

- [Pay attention to your health during your trip.](#)
 - Use sunscreen and insect repellent as directed.
 - Be careful about food and water.
 - Try not to take risks with your health and safety.
 - Limit alcohol intake, and do not drink alcohol and drive.
 - Wear a seatbelt.
 - Wear protective gear when doing adventure activities.
 - Respect your host country and its people by following local laws and customs.
- [Pay attention to your health when you come home.](#)

For more information on your responsibilities as a traveler, listen to “[The Three P’s of Safe and Healthy Travel](#)” podcast.

Know and Share Important Information About Your Trip

Important Information for Travelers

Before you leave, it is important to write down contact information (phone numbers and addresses) of services you may need.

- Find the American Embassy or Consulate in your destination by going to the list of [Websites of U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and Diplomatic Missions](#) (U.S. Department of State). Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens.
 - For specific questions regarding an emergency involving an American citizen overseas, contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747 (from overseas: 202-501-4444).
 - To learn more about services available during an emergency, see the information at [Emergencies: Consular Assistance and Crises Abroad](#).
- Know where health-care resources are located in your destination before you leave. See [Doctors/Hospitals Abroad](#) (U.S. Department of State).

Important Information for a Traveler's Family and Friends

In addition to preparing yourself for your trip, it is important to also prepare your friends and family at home for a possible emergency. Ask a family member, friend, or employer to be your contact person while you are traveling. Before you leave:

- Make arrangements to check in at regular intervals during your trip with this contact person.
- Leave them a copy of your passport, as well as details of your travel plans and how to contact you.
- Leave them a copy of your prescription for any medicines that you are taking and the contact information for your doctor.

If there is an emergency at home, or if a family member is worried about a traveler's welfare, they can ask the embassy or consulate for help. See the [Welfare/Whereabouts Services Abroad](#) webpage for specific services available.

Register with the U.S. Department of State

The U.S. Department of State provides a free travel registration service to U.S. citizens who are traveling or living in another country. Registration allows you to record information about your trip so that an American consular officer can contact and assist you in an emergency. Registration is very helpful if you find yourself in a situation where there is unexpected civil unrest or a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane. Remember, a consular officer cannot assist you if they do not know where you are. For more information, see [Registration of Traveler Emergency Contact and Itinerary Information](#).

Pack Smart

The following things will be useful to have during your trip.

- Copies of your passport and travel documents. Place a copy of your passport and travel documents in each piece of luggage, in case you lose the original documents. Don't forget to leave a copy with a friend or relative at home.
- Items that might go in your [travel health kit](#).

Check the [Transportation Security Administration](#) website for updates on permitted and prohibited items, including medicines that you are allowed to carry onto an airplane.

Some items may not be allowed in other countries. It is a good idea to check the [Customs and Import Restrictions](#) section of the U.S. Department of State Tips for Traveling Abroad.

What to Pack in Your Travel Health Kit

Use this list to help you think of things to pack in your travel health kit. Be sure to think about where you are going and whether you will have access to health items and supplies.

Medicines

- Prescription medicines you usually take
 - If you have a severe allergy and epinephrine has been prescribed by your doctor, bring your Epinephrine auto-injector (for example, an EpiPen).

Special note about prescription medicines

- Pack your prescription medications in your carry-on luggage.
- Pack copies of all prescriptions, including the generic names for medications.
- Pack a note on letterhead stationery from the prescribing physician for controlled substances and injectable medications.
- Leave a copy of your prescriptions at home with a friend or relative.
- Check with the American Embassy or Consulate to make sure that your medicines will be allowed into the country you are visiting. Some countries do not let visitors bring certain medicines into the country.

- Special prescriptions for the trip
 - Medicines to prevent malaria, if needed
 - Antibiotic prescribed by your doctor for self-treatment of moderate to severe diarrhea
- Over-the-counter medicines
 - Antidiarrheal medication (for example, bismuth subsalicylate, loperamide)
 - Antihistamine
 - Decongestant, alone or in combination with antihistamine

- Anti-motion sickness medication
- Medicine for pain or fever (such as acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen)
- Mild laxative
- Cough suppressant/expectorant
- Cough drops
- Antacid
- Antifungal and antibacterial ointments or creams
- 1% hydrocortisone cream

Other important items

- Supplies to prevent illness or injury
 - Insect repellent containing DEET (30%-50%) or picaridin (up to 15%)
 - Sunscreen (preferably SPF 15 or greater) that has both UVA and UVB protection
 - Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
 - Lubricating eye drops
- First-aid supplies
 - First aid quick reference card
 - Basic first-aid items (bandages, gauze, ace bandage, antiseptic, tweezers, scissors, cotton-tipped applicators)
 - Moleskin for blisters
 - Aloe gel for sunburns
 - Digital thermometer
 - Oral rehydration solution packets
- Health insurance card (either your regular plan or supplemental travel health insurance plan) and copies of claim forms

Other items that may be useful in certain circumstances

- Mild sedative or other sleep aid
- Medicine to prevent altitude sickness
- Water purification tablets
- Commercial suture/syringe kits to be used by local health-care provider. (These items will also require a letter on letterhead stationery from the prescribing physician.)
- Latex condoms
- Child safety seats
- Bicycle helmet

Cruise Ship Travel



Don't risk spoiling your cruise vacation with an unexpected illness. Follow these tips for a safe and healthy cruise vacation.

For many people, a cruise is an ideal way to relax and see the world. You are surrounded by the gorgeous blue of the ocean, get waited on hand and foot, have activities and events planned for you, and are provided with a seemingly limitless supply of food and drinks—all while having the opportunity to visit multiple countries and destinations.

Although cruising has many obvious pleasures, potential health hazards are also a risk with cruise ship travel. Staying informed and preparing for these potential hazards can help you stay healthy and get the most out of your cruise vacation.

Vaccines

Regardless of your itinerary, you should be up-to-date on routine vaccines, such as measles/mumps/rubella, varicella, and seasonal flu. Crew members and fellow travelers often come from countries where these diseases are more common than in the United States and where vaccination is not routine. Consequently, outbreaks of chickenpox and rubella (German measles) have been reported on cruise ships.

Additional vaccines you'll need depend on where you'll be stopping and what you're going to do there. CDC's general vaccination recommendations, by country, can be found on the Travelers' Health [destination pages](#). However, discuss the cruise itinerary and your specific travel plans with your doctor. If you're stopping in a country only for a short time, or if you don't plan to leave the tourist area around the dock, certain vaccines may not be necessary.

Even if you are not at risk for yellow fever during port calls, some countries in Africa and South America may require proof of yellow fever vaccination if you have previously visited a country with yellow fever. Visit the [destination pages](#) for a country's yellow fever requirements. Cruise ship companies sometimes have requirements that differ from those of the countries you will be visiting, so be sure to check with the cruise line about those requirements as well.

Nausea, Vomiting, and Diarrhea

Cruise ship outbreaks of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, primarily caused by norovirus, have been reported. The best way to prevent illness is frequent handwashing with soap and water.

Wash your hands before eating and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or touching things that other people have touched, such as stair railings; it is also a good idea to avoid touching your face.

If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) is a good second choice. You will see hand sanitizer dispensers throughout your cruise ship—use them.

While on shore excursions, especially in developing countries, follow basic [food and water precautions](#): eat only food that is cooked and served hot, drink only beverages from sealed containers, avoid ice, and eat fresh fruit only if you have washed it with clean water and peeled it yourself.

If you are feeling sick before your voyage, ask your cruise line if alternative cruising options are available. Consult your doctor to find out whether it is safe for you to sail. If you feel sick during your voyage, report your symptoms to the ship's medical facility and follow their recommendations. For more information about nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea on cruise ships, visit [CDC's Vessel Sanitation Program](#) website.

Other Health Concerns

Respiratory diseases are also common on cruise ships. Frequent handwashing can keep you from getting sick, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue (not your hand) can prevent you from spreading germs. Getting a flu shot is the best way to keep from getting the flu.

Seasickness is a common complaint of cruise ship passengers. If you are (or think you might be) prone to seasickness, talk to your doctor about medicine to decrease your symptoms. Note that many common medications (including some antidepressants, painkillers, and birth control pills) can worsen the nausea of seasickness.

Various stressors associated with cruising—changes in diet, variation in climate, changes to sleep and activity patterns—can worsen a chronic illness. If you have been diagnosed with such an illness, you should be prepared to monitor your health while on a cruise (for example, frequently testing your blood sugar if you have diabetes). If you regularly take medicine for a chronic illness, make sure you bring enough for the duration of the cruise, plus extra in case of delays, and take it on the same schedule as you would at home.

For more information on healthy travel, visit www.cdc.gov/travel.

More Information

- CDC's [Vessel Sanitation Program](#)
- CDC's [Green Sheet Report](#): List of sanitation inspection scores for specific cruise ships

Studying Abroad

Prepare for a safe and healthy study abroad experience by following CDC's travel health tips for students.

Missing out on a unique cultural experience because you're stuck in bed with a travel-related illness or injury is probably not part of your plan for a great study-abroad experience. Fortunately, CDC is here to help! In celebration of International Education Week (November 12-16), we've put together a "study guide" to help you prepare for safe and healthy travel.

Prepare for Travel

Visit the [CDC Travelers' Health website](#) to learn about the health risks at your destination. Make an appointment with a [doctor familiar with travel medicine](#), ideally at least 4–6 weeks before you leave. The doctor will review your medical history to make sure you get the right vaccinations, medicines, and information on safety. You should be up to date on all routine vaccinations (such as influenza, measles/mumps/rubella, and polio), and you may need other travel-related vaccines. If your study-abroad program lasts several months, you'll want to make sure that you've gotten all your routine health check-ups, like seeing your dentist, because the quality of dental and medical care may be different in host countries or more expensive than in the United States.

Before you leave, register with the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. Visit [Doctors/Hospitals Abroad](#) to identify health care resources in the country where you will be living. Learn basic first aid and pack a [travel health kit](#) so you can treat any minor ailments yourself. If you take a medicine regularly, make sure you have enough for the length of your trip.

You'll also want to make sure that you have travel health insurance and possibly evacuation insurance in case you need medical care during your study-abroad program. Visit the Department of State's [Medical Insurance](#) page for some helpful tips and a list of companies that provide this type of insurance.

The [Center for Global Education](#) is another excellent resource that can help you prepare for your study-abroad program.

Protect Your Health Abroad

Wash your hands with soap and clean water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner before you eat, after you cough or sneeze, and after you use the bathroom. In developing countries, [be careful about food and water](#): eat fully cooked food that is served hot or fruits and vegetables you can wash or peel yourself. Drink only bottled, sealed water or water that has been boiled, and avoid ice.

In tropical and subtropical countries, diseases spread by insects may be common. Use an [appropriate insect repellent](#)[PDF - 1.43MB] and wear long pants and sleeves to protect yourself

from bug bites. To prevent infections such as HIV and hepatitis B, which are spread by blood and bodily fluids, don't get tattoos or body piercings. Use latex condoms if you have sex.

After You Come Home

After you return from your trip abroad, get medical attention right away if you aren't feeling well or have been injured. It is especially important to see a doctor if you have a fever, rash, cough, difficulty breathing, or any other unusual symptoms. If you are returning from an area where malaria is a risk and become sick with a fever or flu-like illness for up to 1 year after you return, see a doctor **immediately**, and tell him or her that you have traveled to a place where malaria is present.

More Information

- [Your Survival Guide to Safe and Healthy Travel](#)
- [Illness and Injury Abroad](#)

Adopting a Child from Another Country

Families adopting a child from another country may be at risk for infectious diseases, either from traveling overseas to unite with the child or from contact with the newly arrived child in the United States. Children being adopted in other countries are often at risk for infections because they are not vaccinated, live in crowded conditions, do not have access to clean water, or are malnourished or in poor health. If you are adopting a child from another country, plan for safe travel overseas and arrange for your child to have a medical exam with a pediatrician specializing in adoption health soon after you return home.

Preparing to Travel Overseas

At least 4–6 weeks before you depart to unite with your child, schedule a visit with a travel medicine specialist to discuss disease risks in the destination country and what you can do to avoid them. Your travel medicine specialist may recommend vaccines to protect against diseases in that country. Your travel medicine specialist can also give you advice on travel safety, food and water precautions, and preventing travelers' diarrhea. General guidance for [traveling internationally with children](#) also applies to the adopted child you are bringing home.

People at home who will have close contact with your child (including extended family and caregivers) should be up-to-date on routine vaccines, as well as being vaccinated against hepatitis A and B. They should also have a booster of the vaccine that prevents pertussis (whooping cough) and, depending on the child's country of origin, a booster of polio vaccine. It is important for everyone who has contact with the child to be vaccinated, even if they do not live in the same home; there have been cases of illnesses spread from internationally adopted children to grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other caregivers.

The Overseas Medical Exam

Children who are being adopted overseas by US citizens must have a medical exam in their country of origin, performed by a doctor specially designated by the US Department of State. This exam is designed to detect certain serious illnesses, such as tuberculosis, and should not be relied on to detect all possible health conditions. Additional information about the overseas medical exam is available from the Department of State: http://adoption.state.gov/adoption_process/how_to_adopt/health.php.

The Follow-Up Medical Exam in the United States

Within two weeks of arrival in the United States, your child should have another medical exam to assess his or her general health and screen for other infections, such as intestinal parasites, which are common in internationally adopted children. In some circumstances, screening for developmental delays can be considered.

More Information [International Adoption: Health Guidance and the Immigration Process](#)

Business Travel

Business travelers face different health risks than do leisure travelers. Find out some of the risks of business travel and what you can do to protect yourself.

Stay Safe and Healthy on a Business Trip

In 2012, an estimated 5.1 million US residents traveled overseas for business. With the increasingly global economy, this number is expected to increase. Because of the nature of the trip, business travelers may face different health risks than do leisure travelers. Find out about some of the risks of business travel and what you can do to protect yourself.

You don't always get much advance notice before a business trip. CDC recommends seeing a doctor 4–6 weeks before a trip, but if you don't have that much time, even a last-minute visit can be useful. Some vaccines can be given on shortened schedules or may offer partial protection, even if you don't have time for all the doses. You can also talk to your doctor about health risks at your destination and what you can do to stay healthy (not all diseases can be prevented with vaccines). Visit CDC's [travel destinations page](#) for more specific information on your destination.

You might be frantically trying to pick up your suit from the cleaner and get someone to feed the dog, but while you're rushing around, don't forget to [pack a travel health kit](#). Your kit should include first-aid supplies, any prescription medicines you take, and over-the-counter medicine for diarrhea. Pack some latex condoms in your kit as well, since sexually transmitted diseases may be common where you're going.

Leisure travelers may have time to be able to adjust to [jet lag](#) naturally, but business travelers often have to hit the ground running. If you have time, for a few days before you leave, try to shift your sleep cycle by a couple of hours earlier or later (depending on where you're going). Stay hydrated while you're traveling, and avoid alcohol and caffeine. Try to sleep on long flights; if you have trouble sleeping on planes, you might want to pack a mild sedative in your carry-on luggage.

Business travelers are frequently under a lot of work-related stress, in addition to the stress of traveling. To minimize the negative health effects of stress, eat healthful meals, exercise regularly, avoid alcohol, and get a good night's rest. On longer trips, to maintain your mental health, stay in regular contact with your friends and family at home.

Congratulations! You closed the deal, and now it's time to celebrate. Your hosts may want to take you out to toast your new business relationship, but be careful about drinking too much—alcoholic drinks in some countries can be stronger than you expect. And in developing countries, [be careful about what you eat and drink](#). Bottled water and food that is cooked and served hot are generally safe. Be careful about tap water, ice, and raw fruits and vegetables, or you may end up spending much of the return flight in the airplane bathroom. Business travel may not be all about fun and games, but there's no reason it should make you sick.

Adventure Travel

Adventure travel can be a great way to explore the world and be active. Learning about your risks and preparing for your trip will help make your vacation a fun and safe adventure.

Introduction

"Adventure travel" is a type of tourism, often to remote locations, to explore and engage in physical activity. Adventure travel often includes "extreme" activities such as mountain climbing, exploring caves, bungee jumping, mountain biking, rafting, zip-lining, paragliding, and rock climbing.

This fast-growing travel trend is a popular way to see new places and test your physical abilities. However, these activities also present risks to your health and safety. Learning about these risks and preparing for your trip will help make your vacation a fun and safe adventure.

Risks of Adventure Travel

Adventure activities, both at home and abroad, carry some risk of injury. Because this type of international tourism often involves travel to remote locations, additional adventure travel risks include the lack of quick emergency response if injured, poor trauma care, and unexpected weather changes that can make safety challenging and rescue efforts more difficult. Remember that general outdoor risks, such as sunburn and bug bites, apply to adventure travel as well. But most adventure activities can be fun, exciting, *and* safe if you prepare for your trip and follow good safety practices.

Also be aware that if you *are* injured during your trip, your health insurance may not cover health care you receive while abroad. You can buy travel health and evacuation insurance to fill this gap.

What You Can Do

Adventure travelers, take these steps to prepare for and stay safe during your vacation:

- Make an appointment with a doctor, ideally at least 4–6 weeks before the trip, to get any recommended vaccinations and medical advice. Be sure to talk to the doctor about your planned adventure activities in case there are special recommendations for you.
- Train properly for your trip. Many adventure tours can be physically demanding, so it is important to be fit before your vacation.
- Check with your regular health insurance company to see if your policy will cover any medical care you might need in another country. If not, consider buying travel health and evacuation insurance.
 - Look for gaps in your insurance coverage. For example, your health insurance might not cover medical evacuation if you cannot receive needed treatment where you are. Evacuation by air ambulance can cost more than \$100,000 and must be

paid in advance by people who do not have insurance. You can buy medical evacuation insurance to be sure you will have access to emergency care.

- Evacuation companies often have better resources and experience in some parts of the world than others; travelers may want to ask about a company's resources in a given area before purchase, especially if planning a trip to remote destinations.



- Use a reputable outfitter. Look for a company that has been in business for several years, has a current operating license, and is a member of relevant professional associations such as the local board of tourism. Ask for references and don't be afraid to ask questions!
- Wear protective gear when doing adventure activities and follow safety instructions from your adventure guides.
- Don't drink alcohol before or during outdoor activities.
- Eat and drink regularly to stay hydrated and rest if you feel overheated.
- Avoid too much sun exposure by using sunscreen, wearing protective clothing, and seeking shade.
- Wear bug spray while outdoors to avoid bites from mosquitoes, ticks, and other insects.
- Consider bringing a first aid kit. A number of companies produce advanced medical kits and will customize kits based on specific travel needs.

Think About Your Health Status

No one wants to miss or postpone a trip, but there are times when staying home might be best for health reasons. First, evaluate your health or the health of those traveling with you by using the guide below. Then, talk to your doctor. He or she will help you assess your situation and help you decide whether to postpone your trip.

In general, you should not travel by air if you:

- Will be taking a baby less than 48 hours (2 days) old
- Have passed 36 weeks of pregnancy (or 32 weeks if you are carrying twins, triplets, etc.)
- Have recently had any type of surgery, especially stomach, brain, eye, or orthopedic (bone and joint) surgery. Check with your doctor to see when it is safe for you to travel.
- Have had a recent stomach, eye, or head injury. Check with your doctor to see when it is safe for you to travel.
- Have had a recent heart attack or stroke
- Are suffering from:
 - Chest pain
 - Any disease that you can easily spread to other people (For a listing of infectious diseases, how they are spread, and how long someone is contagious, see [Understand How Infectious Diseases Are Spread.](#))
 - Swelling of the brain caused by bleeding, injury, or infection
 - Severe sinus, ear, or nose infections
 - Severe chronic respiratory diseases, breathlessness at rest, or a collapsed lung
 - Sickle cell disease
 - Psychotic illness except when fully controlled
- Have a fever of 100° F (38° C) or greater AND one or more of the following:

[Understand How Infectious Diseases Are Spread](#)

- Obvious signs of illness (e.g., severe headache, weakness, skin and eyes turning yellow)
- Skin rash
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Persistent, severe cough
- Confusion, especially if it has just started
- Bruising or bleeding (without previous injury)
- Diarrhea that does not go away
- Vomiting that does not go away (other than motion sickness)

Some airlines check for visibly sick passengers in the waiting area and during boarding. If you look like you may be sick, the airline may not let you get on the plane.

Important: If you are sick, check with your airline to see what options you have for rescheduling your flight.

Individuals with Special Considerations for International Travel

Some people may need to take extra care in considering travel or preparing for travel. If you find yourself in one of these categories, it is important to make sure the doctor advising you knows about your needs.

Babies and Small Children:

Traveling with children will require extra thought and planning. Many travel-related vaccinations and preventive medicines that are used for adults are not recommended for young children. Talk with your child's doctor about your travel plans. He or she can give you recommendations on which vaccines or medicines are safe for your child. You may also want to consider bringing your child's car seat, as the availability and quality of such seats abroad may be limited. You can learn more about this topic from the section [Traveling Safely with Infants and Children](#).

Travelers Who Are Pregnant:

If you are pregnant, consult with both your obstetrician and a travel medicine doctor before making any travel decisions. Depending on your stage of pregnancy, preexisting medical conditions, and travel plans, you may want to take additional precautions or even postpone your trip. For example, if you are pregnant and have a serious pre-existing medical condition, it may not be wise to travel to developing countries. In general, the safest time for a pregnant woman to travel is during the second trimester (18-24 weeks). If you are in your third trimester, you should typically plan to stay within 300 miles of home to guarantee access to medical care if problems arise, such as high blood pressure, swelling, or going into labor three weeks or more before your due date (premature labor). Read more about health and vaccine recommendations during pregnancy in the section [Planning for a Healthy Pregnancy and Traveling While Pregnant](#).

Travelers with Disabilities:

Generally, travelers with stable, ongoing disabilities should prepare for an international trip in much the same way as any other traveler would. However, if you have a disability and are planning an international trip, you should take three extra steps to ensure a safe and accessible trip.

1. Consult with your travel agent or tour operator and make sure that resources are available to meet your needs.
2. See a travel medicine doctor, or a doctor familiar with travel medicine, at least 4-6 weeks before you leave. He or she will tell you which vaccines or medicines you will need and give you additional recommendations that fit your needs.
3. Research the resources available to people with disabilities in your destination. The following links are good places to start gathering this information:
 - o CDC's [Travelers with Disabilities](#) section
 - o U.S. Department of State [\[\[forward label=\(Traveling with Disabilities\) link=\(http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#disability\)\]\]](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#disability) section
 - o U.S. Department of Transportation [\[\[forward label=\(Air Accessibility\) link=\(http://www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/airacc.asp\)\]\]](http://www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/airacc.asp) webpage

Travelers with Weakened Immune Systems:

If your immune system is weakened from a disease such as HIV/AIDS or certain cancers, or from chemotherapy or medicines, talk to your doctor about the details of your travel plans. There may be added risks related to travel.

- If your current medical status is unstable or puts your health at serious risk, it may be recommended that you not travel or postpone your trip until you can travel more safely.
- Even if you can travel, you may or may not be able to have certain vaccines or take medications that are normally recommended for your destination or they may not be as effective.
- If you do get sick while traveling, your illness may be more severe or you may have added complications to your existing condition.

Make sure that you fully understand all the risks involved with your travel plans and any ways to protect your health that your doctor recommends before you go. To find out more, please visit the section [The Immunocompromised Traveler](#).

Travelers with Weakened Immune Systems

Many illnesses can weaken the immune system, including HIV/AIDS, different kinds of cancer, liver disease, kidney disease, and multiple sclerosis. In addition, many medicines can weaken the immune system, including steroids, cancer chemotherapy, and drugs to treat rheumatoid arthritis or psoriasis. Regardless of the cause, if you have a weakened immune system and are planning a trip overseas, make an appointment with a travel medicine specialist to talk about what you should do to prepare for safe and healthy travel.

Vaccines

Check the [CDC Travelers' Health website](#) to see what vaccines might be recommended for your destination, and talk to your doctor about which of them are right for you. Most travel vaccines are made from killed bacteria or viruses and can be given safely to people with weakened immune systems. However, they may be less effective than in people with normal immune systems, and you may not be fully protected. Your doctor may recommend blood tests to confirm that a vaccine was effective, or he or she may recommend additional precautions to keep you safe.

Some vaccines, such as MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) and varicella, are made from live viruses. Many people with weakened immune systems should not receive these vaccines. Talk to your doctor what your options are for protecting yourself against these diseases.

[Yellow fever](#) vaccine is made from a live virus, and it cannot be safely given to people whose immune systems are very weak, such as people with HIV infection and low T-cell counts or people receiving cancer chemotherapy. If there is a risk of yellow fever at your destination, CDC recommends delaying your trip until your immune system is strong enough for you to have the vaccine. Some countries may require the vaccine, even if there is no risk of yellow fever. If that's the case, ask your doctor about a medical waiver for the vaccine.

Medicines

If there is a risk of [malaria](#) at your destination, you may need to take medicine to prevent it. People who have weakened immune systems can get seriously ill from malaria, so it's important to closely follow your doctor's instructions for taking the medicine, which may include taking it for several weeks before and after the trip. You should also take steps to [avoid mosquito bites](#): wear insect repellent, wear long pants and sleeves, and sleep under a net if your rooms are exposed to the outdoors.

Depending on where you are going and your planned activities, your doctor may also prescribe medicine to prevent [altitude illness](#) or to treat [travelers' diarrhea](#). These drugs, as well as any you are prescribed to prevent malaria, can interact with medicines you usually take. Make sure your travel doctor knows about all the medicines you take regularly, including vitamin supplements, so that he or she can anticipate potential interactions.

Other Precautions

Not all illnesses can be prevented with vaccines or medicines, and people with weakened immune systems are especially prone to travelers' diarrhea. Make sure you follow CDC's advice for [eating and drinking safely](#). You should also wash your hands often and try to avoid touching surfaces that other people have touched, such as doorknobs and stair rails, with your bare hands.

Travelers with Chronic Illnesses

Travel can be relaxing and rewarding, but people with chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, or arthritis, may face unique challenges when they travel overseas. With a little planning and preparation, however, people with chronic illnesses can have safe and enjoyable trips. If you have a chronic illness and are planning an international trip, visit a travel medicine specialist at least 4–6 weeks before you leave to talk about what you should do to prepare.

Some chronic illnesses and some medicines, such as steroids, can weaken the immune system. See [Travelers with Weakened Immune Systems](#) for more information.

Medicines and Supplies

You might take medicines or use medical supplies (such as asthma inhalers, glucose test strips, or insulin needles) regularly or just for emergencies. If that's the case, make sure you take enough of a supply to last your whole trip, plus a little extra in case of delays. If you are going to be gone a long time, talk to your doctor about how you can get enough medicine for your trip; sometimes insurance companies will only pay for a 30-day supply at a time.

Pack all your medicines and medical supplies in your carry-on luggage. You don't want to be stuck without them if your suitcase gets lost! Medicines should be in their original prescription bottles, and you should also include copies of your original prescriptions. Note that medicines should be taken according to the time since the last dose, not the local time of day, so ask your doctor about scheduling doses when you cross time zones.

Don't plan on being able to buy your medicines at your destination. They may not be available or may not meet US standards. In many developing countries, [counterfeit drugs](#) are a big problem.

If you see a travel medicine specialist separately from your regular doctor, the travel medicine specialist may prescribe trip-specific medicines, such as drugs to prevent malaria or altitude sickness or to treat travelers' diarrhea. If the travel medicine specialist prescribes any medicine, make sure he or she knows what medicines you routinely take, to prevent drug interactions.

Insurance

There are 3 types of [insurance](#) every traveler should consider buying. These may be especially important for travelers with chronic illnesses:

Trip cancellation insurance covers the cost of your trip if, for example, you have to reschedule or cancel because you are too sick to travel.

Travel health insurance covers the cost of health care received in other countries. Even if you have health insurance in the United States, it might not cover you overseas.

Medical evacuation insurance covers the cost of transportation to high-quality health care facilities, in the event of an emergency. This type of insurance is important if you will be traveling in rural or remote areas.

When selecting an insurance policy, always read the fine print, so you are sure that it covers what you need it to cover.

Understand How Infectious Diseases Spread

Knowing how infectious diseases spread will help protect you from getting sick while traveling and decrease the likelihood that you will spread illness to other travelers. The following information will empower you to be a more responsible traveler — so that you can protect your health and the health of others. Two main types of illnesses that you may be able to spread easily to another person are respiratory illnesses (those that affect your breathing) and foodborne illnesses (those spread by eating, drinking, or putting something in your mouth that has been contaminated).

Respiratory Illnesses

Illnesses like the flu spread from person to person when droplets from the cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and get into the mouth or nose of people nearby. The germs in these droplets can often also live on surfaces, such as desks or doorknobs, for 2 hours or longer and can spread when people touch these surfaces and then touch their eyes, mouth, and nose. You can learn more about spreading germs by reading the information in “[Stopping Germs at Home, Work, and School.](#)”

Stop Your Respiratory Illness from Spreading to Others

If you decide to travel while you have a respiratory illness, don't spread your germs to others!

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw away used tissues. (Place them in a trash can or the sick bag when on a flight.)
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Wash after you use the bathroom, sneeze or cough, and before eating or touching anything that you might put in your mouth. (Hand sanitizer with alcohol may be used if no running water is available.)
- Do not share food or drink with others.

Foodborne Illnesses



You will encounter many different foods and food preparations when visiting other countries. Unfortunately, these new foods may also come with a virus, bacteria, or parasite. As a result, foodborne illnesses are common among travelers.

Furthermore, hygiene and safety practices for food and water may be different in other countries than what you are used to at home. You can get a foodborne illness from eating or drinking contaminated food and water.

Avoid Becoming Infected with a Foodborne Illness

- Eat foods that are fully cooked and served hot.
- Eat only fruits and vegetables that you can wash and peel yourself.
- Eat and drink only dairy products that have been pasteurized.
- Do not eat food from street vendors.
- Drink beverages that have been bottled or sealed (water, carbonated drinks, or sports drinks).
- Do not put ice in drinks.
- See country-specific tips for your [destination](#).

Another way that foodborne illnesses can spread is through contact with human feces (stool). This type of contact is often accidental and can occur, for example, when an infected person does not properly wash hands after using the bathroom and then touches food that others will eat. Learn more about foodborne illness by visiting the Travelers' Health [Safe Food and Water page](#).

Stop Your Foodborne Illness from Spreading to Others

- Do not prepare or serve food for others while you have symptoms and for 24 hours after your symptoms are gone.
- On cruise ships or other organized tours, follow warnings about staying away from other passengers. This could mean being isolated away from others for a period of time.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before eating or preparing food.
- Sometimes when you are sick with a foodborne illness, you may not be able to get to a bathroom quickly. If this happens and clothes or other linens are soiled, remove and wash, with hot water and soap, as soon as possible. If you are unable to wash clothing, rinse it as well as possible and place it into a sealed plastic bag.
- Flush any vomit or other waste in a toilet. Put materials that you cannot flush, such as paper towels, into a trash bag. Tie the trash bag closed and throw it away. Keep the surrounding area clean.
- Learn more on CDC's [Foodborne Illness](#) webpage.

Medical Tourism - Getting Medical Care in Another Country

Receiving medical care abroad can be risky. Learn about those risks and how to minimize them.

Going Abroad for Medical Care



"Medical tourism" refers to traveling to another country for medical care. It's estimated that up to 750,000 US residents travel abroad for care each year. Many people who travel for care do so because treatment is much cheaper in another country. In addition, a large number of medical tourists are immigrants to the United States returning to their home country for care. The most common procedures that people undergo on medical tourism trips include cosmetic surgery, dentistry, and heart surgery.

Risks of Medical Tourism

The specific risks of medical tourism depend on the area being visited and the procedures performed, but some general issues have been identified:

- Communication may be a problem. Receiving care at a facility where you do not speak the language fluently increases the chance that misunderstandings will arise about the care.
- Doctors may reuse needles between patients or have other unsafe injection practices, which can transmit diseases such as hepatitis and HIV.
- Medication may be counterfeit or of poor quality in some countries.
- Antibiotic resistance is a global problem, and resistant bacteria may be more common in other countries than in the United States.
- The blood supply in some countries comes primarily from paid donors and may not be screened, which puts patients at risk of HIV and other infections spread through blood.
- Flying after surgery increases the risk for blood clots.

What You Can Do



- If you are planning to travel to another country for medical care, see a travel medicine practitioner at least 4–6 weeks before the trip to discuss general information for healthy travel and specific risks related to the procedure and travel before and after the procedure.
- Check for the qualifications of the health care providers who will be doing the procedure and the credentials of the facility where the procedure will be done. The [Joint Commission International](#) (US-based) certifies health care facilities according to specific standards.
- Make sure that you have a written agreement with the health care facility or the group arranging the trip, defining what treatments, supplies, and care are covered by the costs of the trip.
- Determine what legal actions you can take if anything goes wrong with the procedure.
- If you go to a country where you do not speak the language, determine ahead of time how you will communicate with your doctor and other people who are caring for you.
- Obtain copies of your medical records that includes the lab and other studies done related to the condition for which you are obtaining the care and any allergies you may have.
- Prepare copies of all your prescriptions and a list of all the medicines you take, including their brand names, their generic names, manufacturers, and dosages.
- Arrange for follow-up care with your local health care provider before you leave.
- Before planning "vacation" activities, such as sunbathing, drinking alcohol, swimming, or taking long tours, find out if those activities are permitted after surgery.
- Get copies of all your medical records before you return home.

Guidance from Professional Organizations

- [American Medical Association Guidelines on Medical Tourism\[PDF - 20KB\]](#)
- [Organization for Safety, Asepsis, & Prevention's Travelers Guide to Safe Dental Care](#)
- [The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery Guidelines for Travelers](#)
- [Cosmetic Surgery Tourism Briefing Paper](#)
- [CDC Yellow Book 2014 information on Medical Tourism](#)

Tuberculosis (TB)

What is tuberculosis (TB)?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease caused by a type of bacteria that usually affects the lungs, but can occur in any part of the body. It is spread through the air from one person to another when a person with TB coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. Not everyone infected with TB becomes sick. Symptoms of TB include a cough that last 3 weeks or longer, pain in the chest, coughing up blood or sputum, weakness or tiredness, weight loss, lack of appetite, chills, fever, and sweating at night. Bovine TB (a form of TB usually found in cattle) is a risk in travelers who consume unpasteurized dairy products in countries where TB in cattle is common.

Who is at risk?

TB occurs throughout the world (see [Map 3-15](#)). Travelers who go to areas of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and parts of Central and South America are at greatest risk. Globally, nearly 9 million new TB cases and nearly 1.5 million TB-related deaths occur each year.

What can travelers do to prevent tuberculosis?

Although a TB vaccine exists, CDC does not recommend it for travelers. The vaccine has limited effectiveness at preventing TB. Instead CDC recommends the travelers take the following steps to prevent TB:

- **Avoid close contact or extended time with people who have TB.**
 - This is especially important if you will be in a crowded environment, such as a clinic, hospital, prison, or homeless shelter.
 - Try to avoid close contact with people who are coughing and look sick.
- **Take special precautions if you will be around people with TB (such as those who will be working in hospitals, prisons, or homeless shelters).**
 - Talk to your doctor about being tested for TB infection before you leave the United States.
 - If your test is *negative*, have another test 8 to 10 weeks after you return to the United States.
 - People working in health care settings should talk to an infection control or occupational health expert about procedures for preventing exposure to TB, such as being fit for an N95 respirator.
- **Avoid eating or drinking unpasteurized dairy products.**

If you feel sick and think you may have TB:

- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you feel seriously ill, especially if you have a fever.
 - Schedule a TB test.

- Tell them about your travel.
- For more information about medical care abroad, see [Getting Health Care Abroad](#). See list of [International Joint Commission-accredited facilities](#).
- Avoid contact with other people while you are sick.

Traveler Information

- [Tuberculosis Information for International Travelers](#)
- [TB General Information](#)
- [CDC Tuberculosis Homepage](#)
- [Get the Facts about TB disease](#)

Clinician Information

- [Tuberculosis](#) in *CDC Health Information for International Travel* -“Yellow Book”
- [CDC Tuberculosis Homepage](#)
- [Tuberculosis Information for International Travelers](#)
- [TB Diagnosis](#)
- [TB Treatment](#)
- [Tuberculosis-Standard Notifiable Disease](#)
- [CE—TB 101 for Healthcare Workers](#)

Avoid bug bites

Bugs (including mosquitoes, ticks, and some flies) can spread a number of diseases. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

What type of insect repellent should I use?

- **FOR PROTECTION AGAINST TICKS AND MOSQUITOES:** Use a repellent that contains 20% or more **DEET** for protection that lasts up to several hours. Products containing DEET include Off!, Cutter, Sawyer, and Ultrathon.
- **FOR PROTECTION AGAINST MOSQUITOES ONLY:** Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.
 - **DEET**
 - **Picaridin** (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin. Products containing picaridin include Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus, and Autan [outside the US])
 - **Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)** or **PMD** (Products containing OLE include Repel and Off! Botanicals)
 - **IR3535** (Products containing IR3535 include Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Expedition and SkinSmart)
- Always follow product directions and reapply as directed.
 - If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.
 - Follow package directions when applying [repellent on children](#). Avoid applying repellent to their hands, eyes, and mouth.
- Consider using [permethrin-treated](#) clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself.
 - Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings. See the product information to find out how long the protection will last.
 - If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions carefully.
 - Do **not** use permethrin directly on skin.

What other steps should I take to prevent bug bites?

- **Prevent mosquito bites.**
 - Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
 - Stay and sleep in screened or air-conditioned rooms.
 - Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.
- **Prevent tick bites.**
 - Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
 - Tuck in shirts, tuck pants into socks, and wear closed shoes instead of sandals to prevent bites.
 - Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass, brush, and leaves. Walk in the center of hiking trails.

- **Prevent tsetse fly bites.**
 - The tsetse fly lives in sub-Saharan Africa and can spread African sleeping sickness (African trypanosomiasis).
 - Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
 - Clothing fabric should be at least medium weight because the tsetse fly can bite through thin fabric.
 - Wear neutral-colored clothing. The tsetse fly is attracted to bright colors, very dark colors, metallic fabric, and the color blue.
 - Avoid bushes during the day, when the tsetse fly is less active. It rests in bushes and will bite if disturbed.
 - Inspect vehicles for tsetse flies before entering. The flies are attracted to moving vehicles.

What should I do if I am bitten by bugs?

- **If you are bitten by mosquitoes:**
 - Avoid scratching mosquito bites.
 - Apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce itching.
- **Find and remove ticks from your body.**
 - Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors.
 - Check your entire body (under your arms, in and around your ears, in your belly button, behind your knees, between your legs, around your waist, and especially in your hair). Use a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body.
 - Be sure to [remove ticks properly](#).
 - Parents should check their children for ticks.
 - Check your [pets](#) and belongings. Ticks can be on outdoor equipment and clothes.

What can I do to avoid bed bugs?

Although bed bugs do not carry disease, they are an annoyance. Take the following precautions to avoid them:

- Inspect your accommodations for bed bugs on mattresses, box springs, bedding, and furniture.
- Keep suitcases closed when they are not in use and try to keep them off the floor.
- Keep clothes in your suitcase when you are not wearing them.
- Inspect clothes before putting them back in your suitcase.

Sun Exposure

Travelers spending time outdoors are exposed to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays, even on cloudy days. Travelers are at increased risk when traveling near the equator, during summer months, and at high altitudes. Reflection from the snow, sand, and water increases exposure, so consider sun safety during outdoor activities, including snow skiing, spending time at the beach, swimming, and sailing.

Protect Yourself from the Sun

- Stay in the shade, especially during midday hours (10 am to 4 pm).
- Wear clothing to protect exposed skin.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wear sunglasses that block both [UVA and UVB](#) rays.
- Use sunscreen.
 - Use SPF 15 or higher.
 - Look for “blocks UVA and UVB” or “broad spectrum” on the label.
 - Apply liberally (minimum of 1 oz) at least 20 minutes before sun exposure.
 - Apply to all exposed skin. Remember to apply to ears, scalp, lips, neck, tops of feet, and backs of hands.
 - Reapply at least every 2 hours and each time you get out of the water or sweat heavily.
 - If you are also using bug spray, apply sunscreen first and bug spray second. Sunscreen may need to be reapplied more often.
 - Throw away sunscreens after 1–2 years.
- Avoid indoor tanning. Getting a “base tan” before your vacation does damage to your skin and doesn't protect you from sun exposure on your trip.

Treating a Sunburn

Take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen to relieve pain, headache, and fever. Drink plenty of water, and soothe burns with cool baths or by gently applying cool, wet cloths.

Use a topical moisturizing cream or aloe to provide additional relief. Don't go back into the sun until the burn has healed. If skin blisters, lightly bandage or cover the area with gauze to prevent infection. Don't break blisters (this slows healing and increases risk of infection). Apply antiseptic ointment if blisters break.

Seek medical attention if any of the following occurs:

- Severe sunburn, especially if it covers more than 15% of the body.
- Dehydration (see “[Travel to Hot Climates](#)”).
- High fever (above 101°F).
- Extreme pain that lasts more than 48 hours.

Jet Lag



Jet lag can be a problem for travelers who are crossing several time zones. Although it is not a serious condition, jet lag can make it hard for you to enjoy your vacation for the first few days. For business travelers, who may be expected to travel long distances and start work immediately after arrival, jet lag can affect mood, ability to concentrate, and physical and mental performance. Fortunately, you can take steps to minimize the effects of jet lag.

Before Travel

- Exercise, eat a healthful diet, and get plenty of rest.
- A few days before you leave, start going to bed an hour or two later than usual (before traveling west) or earlier than usual (before traveling east) to shift your body's clock.
- Break up a long trip with a short stop in the middle, if possible.

During Travel

- Avoid large meals, alcohol, and caffeine.
- Drink plenty of water.
- On long flights, get up and walk around periodically.
- Sleep on the plane, if you can.

After You Arrive

- Don't make any important decisions the first day.
- Eat meals at the appropriate local time.
- Spend time in the sun.
- Drink plenty of water, and avoid excess alcohol or caffeine.
- If you are sleepy during the day, take short naps (20–30 minutes) so you can still sleep at night.
- Talk to your doctor about taking medicine to help you sleep at night.

Travel to High Altitudes

The low oxygen levels found at high altitudes can cause problems for travelers who are going to destinations higher than 8,000 feet above sea level. The best way to avoid getting sick is to ascend gradually, but if you have to ascend quickly, medicines are available to prevent altitude illness.

Ascend Gradually

If you plan to travel to a higher altitude and sleep there, you can get sick if you don't ascend gradually:

- Do not go from a low altitude to sleeping at higher than 9,000 feet above sea level in one day. Instead, spend a few days at 8,000–9,000 feet before proceeding to a higher altitude to give your body time to adjust to the low oxygen levels.
- Once you are above 9,000 feet, increase your sleeping altitude by no more than 1,600 feet per day. For every 3,300 feet you ascend, try to spend a day without ascending further.
- Do not drink alcohol or do heavy exercise for at least the first 48 hours after you arrive at an altitude above 8,000 feet.
- As an alternative, consider taking a day trip to a higher altitude. It's less risky to take a day trip to a higher altitude and then return to a lower altitude to sleep.

Sometimes your itinerary may not allow gradual ascent. If this is the case, talk to your doctor about prescribing a medicine to prevent altitude illness. You should also be familiar with the symptoms of altitude illness so that you can take steps to prevent it from becoming more severe. Many high-altitude destinations are remote and lack access to medical care, so preventing altitude illness is better than getting sick and needing emergency treatment.

Altitude Illness

The symptoms of altitude illness are similar to those of a hangover: headache, feeling tired, lack of appetite, nausea, and vomiting. Children who cannot yet talk may just seem fussy. Mild cases can be treated according to symptoms (such as with painkillers for a headache) and should go away on their own within a few days. Medicines are available to shorten the time it takes to get used to high altitude. However, people with altitude illness should not continue to ascend until they have gotten used to the altitude. **Critically, a person whose symptoms are getting worse while resting at the same altitude must descend or risk serious illness or death.**

One severe consequence of altitude illness is swelling of the brain (high-altitude cerebral edema [HACE]). Symptoms include extreme fatigue, drowsiness, confusion, and loss of coordination. HACE is rare, but it can be fatal. If it develops, the person must immediately descend to a lower altitude.

Swelling of the lungs (high-altitude pulmonary edema [HAPE]) is another severe consequence of altitude illness. Symptoms include being out of breath, weakness, and cough. A person with HAPE should also descend and may need oxygen.

Preexisting Medical Conditions

People with preexisting medical conditions should talk with a doctor before traveling to high altitudes:

- Before their trip, people with heart or lung disease should talk to a doctor who is familiar with high-altitude medicine.
- People with diabetes need to be aware that complications of diabetes may be triggered by altitude illness and may be hard to treat if they are taking medicine for altitude illness.
- Pregnant women can make brief trips to high altitudes, but they should talk with their doctor because some doctors recommend that pregnant women not sleep at altitudes above 12,000 feet.

Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism

Some long-distance travelers are at risk for deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE). DVT occurs when a blood clot forms in a large vein. Part of a clot may break off and travel to the lungs, causing a PE, which can be fatal.

Protect yourself by knowing your risk and taking steps to prevent DVT.

Am I at risk for DVT?

Almost anyone can have DVT. People traveling for extended periods of time may be at increased risk for DVT because they have limited movement. The increased risk is usually associated with air travel, but DVT can also form during travel by bus, train, or car.

Most people who develop travel-associated DVT have additional risk factors, including:

- A previous blood clot
- Family history of blood clots
- Known clotting disorder
- Recent surgery or injury
- Use of estrogen-containing birth control or hormone replacement therapy
- Older age
- Obesity
- Active cancer (or undergoing chemotherapy)
- Limited mobility

Steps to DVT Prevention

You can take steps to help prevent DVT. For long distance travelers, these steps include

- Getting up occasionally and walking around.
- Exercising your calf muscles and stretching your legs while you're sitting. Try these exercises next time you travel:
 - Raising and lowering your heels while keeping your toes on the floor.
 - Raising and lowering your toes while keeping your heels on the floor.
 - Tightening and releasing your leg muscles.
- Selecting an aisle seat when possible.

For long-distance travelers with additional risk factors for DVT, talk to your doctor about taking extra precautions such as

- Wearing properly fitted medical compression stockings.
- Taking medication before departure to prevent DVT.

Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment

It is helpful to know the signs and symptoms in the event that you develop DVT or PE. If you have symptoms of DVT call a doctor right away. If you have symptoms of PE you should seek immediate medical care from a doctor or the emergency department. Early detection and treatment can prevent death or complications.

PE Symptoms

DVT Symptoms

- Swelling, pain, or tenderness in the affected limb (usually the leg)
- Redness and increased warmth of the skin in the affected limb

- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Faster than normal heartbeat
- Chest pain
- Cough (which may be bloody)
- Lightheadedness or fainting

It is not possible to diagnose either condition without special tests that can be performed only by a doctor, such as an ultrasound, a CT scan, or an MRI. That is why it is important for you to seek medical care if you experience any of the symptoms of DVT or PE.

DVT and PE are treatable, although a large PE can result in sudden death. Sometimes medicines and devices are used to dissolve the clot. Typically, medicines are taken for several weeks to months after the clot to prevent more clots from forming and give the body a chance to dissolve or heal existing clots.

What is CDC Doing?

CDC is conducting research to learn more about risk factors and improve the diagnosis and treatment of DVT/PE by funding the Thrombosis and Hemostasis Centers Research and Prevention Network. In addition, CDC funds health promotion and wellness initiatives to provide people with information about how to prevent DVT and its complications. For example, the *Clot Connect* education and support program (www.clotconnect.org) receives some funding from CDC for an education website (for information on travel-associated clots see <http://patientblog.clotconnect.org/2010/11/22/long-distance-travel-and-blood-clots>). In collaboration with the Venous Disease Coalition (VDC), CDC has launched *This is Serious*, a national campaign to increase awareness and action around the prevention of DVT and PE among women. The campaign encourages women to be aware of DVT/PE symptoms, and to talk to their doctors about their risks.

Useful Information:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/dvt/>
- <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dvt/>
- <http://www.clotconnect.org>
- <http://www.thisisserious.org>
- <http://www.stoptheclot.org>

Travelers' Diarrhea

Travelers' diarrhea is the most common travel-related illness. It can occur anywhere, but the highest-risk destinations are in most of Asia (except for Japan) as well as the Middle East, Africa, Mexico, and Central and South America.

Prevention

In otherwise healthy adults, diarrhea is rarely serious or life-threatening, but it can certainly make for an unpleasant trip. Take steps to avoid diarrhea when you travel.

Eat & Drink Safely

Choose foods and beverages carefully to lower your risk of diarrhea (see [Food & Water Safety](#)). Eat only food that is cooked and served hot. (Avoid, for example, food that has been sitting on a buffet.) Eat raw fruits and vegetables only if you have washed them in clean water or peeled them. Drink only beverages from factory-sealed containers, and avoid ice (because it may have been made from unclean water).

Keep Your Hands Clean

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. In general, it's a good idea to keep your hands away from your mouth.

Treatment

Fluid Replacement

People with diarrhea should drink lots of fluids to stay hydrated. This is especially important for young children or adults with chronic illnesses. In serious cases of travelers' diarrhea, oral rehydration solution—available online or in pharmacies in developing countries—can be used for fluid replacement.

Antibiotics

Many travelers carry antibiotics with them so they can treat diarrhea early if they start to get sick. The choice of antibiotics varies depending on the destination. Ask your doctor if you should take an antibiotic on your trip.

Over-the-Counter Drugs

Several drugs, such as Lomotil or Imodium, can be bought over-the-counter to treat the symptoms of diarrhea. These drugs decrease the frequency and urgency of needing to use the bathroom, and they may make it easier for a person with diarrhea to ride on a bus or airplane while waiting for an antibiotic to take effect.

Getting Sick after Travel

We hope you had great experiences and made many wonderful new memories, but the truth is that sometimes travelers come home with more than souvenirs. Fortunately, most after-travel illnesses are mild and not a concern, such as a head cold or an upset stomach. However, some symptoms may warrant a trip to the doctor.

Fever

If you have been in a country with malaria and develop a fever within a month after you leave, see a doctor immediately. Most fevers are caused by less serious illnesses. But because malaria is a medical emergency, your doctor must first rule it out. A fever could still be malaria even if you took antimalarial medicine because the medicine is not 100% effective. Most malaria develops within 30 days, but rare cases can lie dormant for a year or longer. So always tell your doctor about any travel you have done, even if it was months ago.

Persistent Diarrhea

Most cases of diarrhea go away by themselves in a few days, but see your doctor if you have diarrhea that lasts for 2 weeks or more. Persistent diarrhea can make you lose nutrients and is often caused by a parasitic infection that will need to be treated with special drugs.

Skin Problems

Skin problems (rashes, boils, fungal infections, bug bites) are among the most common illnesses reported by people who have returned from international travel. Most skin problems are not serious, but they may be a sign of a serious illness, especially if you also have a fever.

At the Doctor

Whatever the reason, if you go to the doctor after returning from a trip overseas, tell him or her about your recent travel. Make sure to include all relevant details:

- What you did on your trip.
- How long you were gone.
- Where you stayed (fancy hotel, native dwelling, tent).
- What you ate and drank while you were there.
- Whether you were bitten by bugs.
- Whether you swam in freshwater.
- Any other possible exposures (sex, tattoos, piercings).