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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>

If you have any questions, concerns or would like to make an appointment please contact the Immunization/Foreign Travel Department staff.

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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.](#)

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

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

- U.S. Department of State [[forward label=(Traveling with Disabilities)]]
link=(http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#disability))] section
- U.S. Department of Transportation [[forward label=(Air Accessibility)]]
link=(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 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.

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.

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. 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.

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. 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.**

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.

Zika

Zika is a disease caused by a virus spread to people through mosquito bites. Outbreaks of Zika have occurred in areas of Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas. See [Zika Travel Information](#) for information on countries and territories with Zika.

Many people infected with Zika virus do not get sick. Among those who develop symptoms, sickness is usually mild, with symptoms that last for several days to a week. Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) is a rare disorder that can cause muscle weakness and paralysis for a few weeks to several months. Current CDC research suggests that GBS is strongly associated with Zika; however, only a small proportion of people with recent Zika virus infection get GBS. Most people fully recover from GBS, but some have permanent damage. For more information, see [Zika and GBS](#).

Zika Virus in Pregnancy

A pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus. Infection during pregnancy can cause severe birth defects. CDC recommends special precautions for the following groups:

- Women who are pregnant:
 - Should not travel to any area below 6,500 feet in an area with [epidemic](#) Zika.
 - If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor first and strictly follow [steps to prevent mosquito bites](#) during your trip. If your itinerary is limited **entirely** to areas above 6,500 feet, there is minimal risk of getting Zika from a mosquito.
 - If you have a partner who lives in or has traveled to an area with Zika, either use [condoms \(or other barriers to prevent infection\)](#) or do not have sex ([vaginal, anal, or oral](#)) during your pregnancy.
- Women who are trying to become pregnant:
 - Before you or your partner travel to an area with [epidemic](#) Zika, talk to your doctor about your plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus infection.
 - See [CDC guidance](#) for how long you should wait to get pregnant after travel to an area with epidemic Zika.
 - You and your partner should strictly follow [steps to prevent mosquito bites](#).
- People who have traveled to an area with [epidemic](#) Zika and have a pregnant partner should use condoms or not have sex (vaginal, anal, or oral) during the pregnancy.
- Pregnant women should talk with their healthcare provider and consider postponing nonessential travel to [Southeast Asia](#).

What can travelers do to prevent Zika?

There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika. Travelers can protect themselves by preventing mosquito bites (see section “Avoiding Bug Bites”). Because Zika can be sexually transmitted, if you have sex ([vaginal, anal, or oral](#)) while traveling, you should use [condoms \(or other barriers to prevent infection\)](#).

After travel:

Many people infected with Zika virus do not feel sick. If a mosquito bites an infected person while the virus is still in that person’s blood, it gets infected and can spread the virus when biting another person. **Even if they do not feel sick, travelers returning to the United States from an area with Zika should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks so that they do not spread Zika to mosquitoes, who can then spread Zika to other people.**

People who have traveled to an area with Zika should use condoms to protect their sex partners.

If you are thinking about pregnancy, talk with your healthcare provider and wait to become pregnant.

If you feel sick and think you may have Zika:

- Talk to your doctor if you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Tell him or her about your travel.
- Take acetaminophen (paracetamol) to relieve fever and pain. Do not take aspirin, products containing aspirin, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen until dengue can be ruled out.
- Get lots of rest and drink plenty of liquids.

If you are pregnant:

Talk to a doctor or other health care provider after travel to an areas with a current outbreak of Zika, **even if you don’t feel sick**. Pregnant travelers returning from these areas, or who have had a possible sexual exposure, should be offered testing for Zika virus infection.

- If you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes, talk to your doctor immediately and tell him or her about your travel or possible sexual exposure.
- If you do not have symptoms, testing should be offered if you see a health care provider, up to 12 weeks after you return from travel or your last possible sexual exposure.

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.

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
- 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.

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

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. Selecting an aisle seat when possible.
- 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.

- DVT Symptoms include: Swelling, pain, or tenderness in the affected limb, redness and increased warmth of the skin in the affected limb
- PE Symptoms include: Unexplained shortness of breath, faster than normal heart beat, chest pain, cough which may be bloody, lightheadedness or fainting.

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).