

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TRAVEL MEDICINE

In the Clinic
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How Can I Stay Safe During Travel?

- Stay up-to-date on your vaccines. Ask your doctor if you need any extra vaccines before traveling, such as for rabies or hepatitis.
- If you take medicine, be sure to bring enough of it.
- Use condoms and other safe sex practices.
- Don't drive after drinking alcohol, and always wear your seat belt.
- Don't get into unmarked taxis or very crowded buses.
- Don't travel alone or at night.
- Don't drink excessively or use street drugs.
- If you are going to a high-altitude area, try to sleep at a lower altitude and hike to the higher altitudes during the day. You may also consider limiting alcohol.
- If you get travelers' diarrhea, take bismuth solution.
- If you have bloody diarrhea, have a temperature above 102 °F, or have been injured or sexually assaulted, seek medical care right away.
- In an emergency, contact your U.S. Embassy (www.usembassy.gov).

How Can I Stay Safe in a Resource-Limited Area?

- If you are not sure whether the water is clean, drink bottled water, soft drinks, or boiled or purified water. Do not use ice cubes unless you know that they were made from clean water.
- Eat only piping hot food that has been completely cooked. Processed or packaged foods are usually safe. Don't eat food from street vendors.
- In general, don't purchase medicines in these areas. If you need to, refer to a hotel physician or international assistance agency.

How Can I Stay Safe From Insects and Animals?

- If you travel to an area with a lot of mosquitoes, wear long sleeves and long pants. Sleep in rooms with screens, air conditioning, or bed netting. Wear DEET-based bug spray.



- To avoid ticks, don't walk in tall grass. Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and closed shoes (not sandals). Do daily tick checks.
- To avoid rabies, don't pet or touch stray dogs, monkeys, bats, or other animals. If an animal bites or scratches you, wash with soap and water and seek medical care right away.

How Can I Stay Safe on a Plane?

- If you use oxygen, call the airline ahead of time.
- Long flights can put you at risk for blood clots. To stay safe, drink plenty of water, get up and walk around often, and consider wearing compression stockings.
- If you are in your last trimester of pregnancy, make sure that the airline will allow you on the plane.

How Can I Stay Safe on a Cruise?

- If you get motion sickness, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about what might help.
- It is common for the flu and norovirus to be passed around on cruises. Norovirus causes diarrhea and other symptoms. Get a flu shot before your cruise.

Questions for my Doctor

- Do I need to take any medicines before I leave for my trip?
- Do I need any extra vaccines? Am I up-to-date on routine vaccines?
- What medicines should I bring with me?
- What should I do if there's an emergency?

For More Information



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel
World Health Organization
www.who.int/ith/en