

## TRAVELER'S HEALTH INFORMATION

- **Before you go make sure your vaccines are up to date. It is best to schedule an appointment for vaccination at least 4-6 weeks before your planned trip.**
- **For some destinations, you may need to take pills to prevent malaria**
- **Check the Center for Disease Control's website for vaccines you might need, health warnings about your destination, and helpful travel information ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).**
- **Pack a "Traveler's Health Kit." (see below)**
- **Carry with you insurance information. Remember that Medicare does not provide coverage for medical costs outside the U.S. You can get information about travel insurance from the State Department ([travel.state.gov/travel/index/html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/index/html)), International SOS ([www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com)), MEDEX ([www.medexassist.com](http://www.medexassist.com)), and IAMAT ([www.iamat.org](http://www.iamat.org)).**

### Vaccines:

Depending on your destination, any of the following vaccines may be needed. Our office can provide all these vaccinations to you, except the Japanese encephalitis vaccine. There are also travel clinics in New York City, like NY Innoculations at 440 East 69<sup>th</sup> Street between First and York (212-746-1601). Vaccine prices vary based on supply of vaccine.

- **Diphtheria-Tetanus (DT)** should be given to all travelers and is boosted every 10 years.
- **Hepatitis A (HAV)** should be given to all those planning to travel to any area other than Western Europe. The vaccine is given as 2 shots at 0 and six months. Protective immunity is seen 2 weeks after the first shot. With 2 shots, protection may last for 20 years. Not given to patients allergic to 2-phenoxyethanol.
- **Hepatitis B (HBV)** if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months in the region, or be exposed through medical treatment. The vaccine is given as 3 shots at 0, 1month, and 6 months. Not given to those with hypersensitivity to yeast.
- **Polio (IPV)** if you are traveling to an infected area. Vaccine is given as a life-time booster
- **Rabies:** if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
- **Typhoid** if traveling to a high risk area. Given as an injection or as pills, boosted every 2 (injection) or 5 (pills) years.
- **Meningococcal** if traveling in the meningitis belt (sub-Saharan Africa during the dry season) or Saudi Arabia during the Hajj.

- **Japanese encephalitis**, only if you plan to visit rural areas for 4 weeks or more, except under special circumstances, such as a known outbreak of Japanese encephalitis. This vaccine is given in 3 shots and carries a risk for anaphylaxis with the third injection.
- As needed, booster doses for **pneumococcal, Influenza, measles, and varicella**.
- **Yellow Fever** certificate of vaccination may be needed to enter certain countries in Africa and Central and South America. This vaccine is boosted every 10 years. Our office is certified to provide this vaccine.

## **General Health Tips:**

### **To stay healthy, do...**

- Wash hands often with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer, like Purell, that contains >60% ethyl alcohol (less than 60% is not effective in killing bacteria).
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an “absolute 1-micron or less” filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. “Absolute 1-micron filters” are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: **boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it**.
- If you visit an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (You must get a prescription prior to traveling.)
- **Protect yourself from mosquito bites:**
  - Pay special attention to mosquito protection between dusk and dawn. This is when the type of mosquito whose bite transmits malaria is active.
  - Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
  - Use insect repellents that contain [DEET \(diethylmethylnolamide\)](#).
  - Read and follow the directions and precautions on the product label.
  - Apply insect repellent to exposed skin.
  - Do not put repellent on wounds or broken skin.
  - Do not breathe in, swallow, or get into the eyes (DEET is toxic if swallowed). If using a spray product, apply DEET to your face by spraying your hands and rubbing the product carefully over the face, avoiding eyes and mouth.
  - Unless you are staying in air-conditioned or well-screened housing, purchase a [bed net impregnated with the insecticide permethrin or deltamethrin](#). Or, spray the bed net with one of these insecticides if you are unable to find a pretreated bed net.
  - DEET may be used on adults, children, and infants older than 2 months of age. Protect infants by using a carrier draped with mosquito netting with an elastic edge for a tight fit.

- Children under 10 years old should not apply insect repellent themselves. Do not apply to young children's hands or around eyes and mouth.
- For details on how to protect yourself from insects and how to use repellents, see the CDC information about [Protection against Mosquitoes and Other Arthropods](#).
- If you are visiting friends and relatives in your home country in areas where malaria occurs, please read the the CDC information about [malaria prevention recommendations for recent immigrants](#) on the CDC malaria site.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

### **To avoid getting sick...**

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including [rabies](#) and [plague](#)).
- Don't swim in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer.
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### **What you need to bring with you:**

- Long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and a hat to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects.
- Insect repellent containing [DEET](#).
- Bed nets impregnated with permethrin. (Can be purchased in camping or military supply stores. Overseas, permethrin or another insecticide, deltamethrin, may be purchased to treat bed nets and clothes.)
- Flying-insect spray or mosquito coils to help clear rooms of mosquitoes. The product should contain a pyrethroid insecticide; these insecticides quickly kill flying insects, including mosquitoes.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, and hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s) and a note from your doctor if you are on prescription pain medication, sedatives, or use needles for insulin or other medication.

## **After you return home:**

If you have visited a malaria-risk area, continue taking your antimalarial drug for 4 weeks (chloroquine, doxycycline, or mefloquine) or seven days (atovaquone/proguanil) after leaving the risk area

**Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness.** If you become ill with a fever or flu-like illness either while traveling in a malaria-risk area or after you return home (for up to 1 year), you should seek **immediate** medical attention and should tell the physician your travel history.

## **Traveler's Health Kit**

Medications:

- Copies of all prescriptions and enough medication to last for the whole trip (carry these on the plane with you)
- Anti-malarial medication if needed.
- Anti-diarrheal medication (Pepto-bismol, Immodium)
- Antibiotics for self-treatment of moderate to severe diarrheal illness
- Antihistamine (like Benadryl)
- Decongestant (like Sudafed)
- Anti-motion sickness medication
- Acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, or other medication for pain or fever
- Mild laxative
- Throat lozengers
- Antacid
- Antifungal or antibacterial ointments or creams
- 1% hydrocortisone cream for itching or rashes

Other important items:

- Insect repellent containing DEET (up to 50%)
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater)
- Aloe gel for sunburns
- Digital thermometer
- Oral rehydration solution packages
- Basic first-aid items (adhesive bandages, gauze, ace wrap, tweezers, scissors, cotton-tipped applicators)
- Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Moleskin for blisters
- Lubricating eye drips (e.g. Natural Tears)

- First Aid Quick Reference Card

Other items that might be useful:

- Mild sedative or sleeping pill
- High altitude prevention medication (Diamox)
- Water purification tablets
- Latex condoms
- Address and phone numbers of area hospitals or clinics

Commercial travel kits are available on line from many suppliers

- Adventure medical kits: [www.adventuremedicalkits.com](http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com)
- Chinook Medical Gear: [www.chinookmed.com](http://www.chinookmed.com)
- Harris International Health Care: [www.safetravel.com](http://www.safetravel.com)
- Travel Medicine, Inc.: [www.travelmed.com](http://www.travelmed.com)
- Wilderness Medicine Outfitters: [www.wildernessmedicine.com](http://www.wildernessmedicine.com)