

Health Recommendations for Persons Traveling Outside the United States

Persons traveling outside the United States are at increased risk of illness with infectious diseases. The following are general health guidelines for persons traveling outside the United States.

Know Before You Go

- At least 1-2 months before you leave on your trip, contact the Nevada State Health Division (phone number is listed below) for health recommendations specific to the places that you will be visiting. It is important that you let them know both the countries and the names of cities that you will be visiting. They can also advise you of disease outbreaks occurring in other countries.
- Both of these health departments will let you know what travel immunizations you will need and what medications you will need to take with you.
- Consider purchasing travel insurance prior to leaving the United States. Your health insurance may not cover medical expenses while outside the United States and adequate medical facilities overseas may be limited. Travel insurance can help you pay for unexpected medical expenses while on your trip.
- If you have been diagnosed with certain medical conditions, travel to some places may not be recommended (e.g. rural areas with limited medical care, or destinations that require strenuous travel conditions). In addition, some countries may deny entry to persons with certain medical conditions. Contact the embassies of the countries you will be visiting, your tour company, or travel agent for information.

Travel Immunizations

- There are immunizations that can protect you against some infectious diseases to which you may be exposed while traveling. These immunizations are different from the ones you and your children routinely receive. These immunizations need to be taken prior to you leaving the United States and may take weeks or longer to be fully protective. Diseases for which you may need to be vaccinated include:
 - Hepatitis A
 - Japanese Encephalitis
 - Meningococcal Infection (Meningitis)
 - Typhoid Fever
 - Yellow Fever
 - Rabies (when coming in contact with animals like bats and wild dogs)
- Some immunizations are only available at travel immunization clinics. Health insurance may or may not cover the costs of these vaccines.
- Make sure you are up-to-date on all of your routine immunizations (like Hepatitis B, polio, pertussis, measles, influenza, etc.).

Medications to Bring Along

- If you will be visiting an area where malaria is normally found, you will need to take a prescription medication before, during, and after your trip. The drugs used to protect a person from malaria vary from country to country.
- You may want to ask your doctor for antibiotics and an anti-diarrheal medication in the event you become infected with a foodborne illness while overseas. You would take these medications only if you get sick while you are traveling.
- If you are currently on prescription medications, bring enough of these medications to last at least the entire duration of your trip. Prescriptions filled here may not be available in other countries.

Carry all of your prescriptions in their original containers with the prescription label clearly visible.

- Medications purchased outside the United States may not be as safe or effective as medications purchased in the United States.

General Prevention Guidelines

- If you are going to area with mosquitoes and other insects, bring an insect repellent containing DEET with you to prevent you from being bitten.
- Wear long sleeve shirts and pants at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Do not buy food from street vendors. If you do buy food from local vendors, remember to “boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.”
- If you are traveling to an area where the sun is strong (beaches, tropics, mountains, etc.) wear a hat and bring sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30.
- Bring a travel health kit with you (see below).
- In some countries, avoid drinking water (including ice) from faucets, water fountains, streams, and lakes. Safe sources of beverages include bottled water, soda and beer.

Medical Tourism:

- Some Americans travel overseas for medical and dental care that is either less expensive than found in the USA, or unavailable in this country. This is known as “Medical Tourism.”
- *In addition to* all of the recommendations above, before seeking medical or dental care overseas, make sure that the medical facilities in other countries meet the medical care and safety standards found in this country.
- If a certain medical treatment is available overseas but is not available in the USA, find out why. If the US government does not allow the treatment due to safety or health risks, you may be putting your health in jeopardy.

Assemble Your Own Travel Health Kit

It is important to pack a health kit when you will be away from home. Kits can be purchased commercially, but you can assemble your own at home as well. The specific contents should be based on destination, duration of travel, type of travel and the traveler’s health history. The following list is not comprehensive, but is a good starting point for making your own kit:

- Medications
 - Anti-malarial medication
 - Medication to treat or prevent high-altitude illness (if necessary)
 - Pain or fever medication such as aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen
 - Stomach upset or diarrhea medication: prescription antibiotics for treatment of moderate to severe diarrhea as prescribed by a doctor, mild laxative, antacid, oral rehydration solutions or over-the-counter anti-diarrheal
 - Respiratory or throat medications e.g., antihistamine, decongestant, cough suppressant, throat lozenges, etc.
 - Anti-motion sickness medication
 - Any other over-the-counter taken regularly at home

- Basic First Aid

- Disposable gloves, at least two pairs
 - Adhesive bandages, multiple sizes
 - Gauze and adhesive tape
 - Elastic wrap for sprain or strains
 - Antiseptic
 - Tweezers*, scissors* and cotton swabs
 - Antifungal and antibacterial creams
 - 1% hydrocortisone cream
 - Anti-itch topical cream for insect bites or stings
 - Aloe gel for sunburn*
 - Moleskin for blisters
 - Digital thermometer
 - Saline eye drops*
 - First-aid quick reference card
- Other Important Items
 - Insect repellent containing DEET*
 - Sunscreen, SPF 30 or greater*
 - Antibacterial hand wipes or sanitizer
 - Extra pair of glasses or contacts
 - Mild sedative or sleep aid
 - Condoms
 - Water purification tablets

**Note:* Pack these items in checked baggage, since they may not be allowed in carry-on bags on aircraft (e.g. sharp instruments, items containing more than 3 ounces of liquid, etc.)

Contact Card

In the event of a medical emergency while you are out of the country, it is good to have a contact card with you. A contact card with the following information will help save time in urgent situations: the addresses and phone numbers of family members or close contacts still in the United States; your healthcare provider at home; area hospitals or clinics in the destinations; and the United States Embassy or Consulate in the destinations.

When the Trip is Over

If after you return home, you experience any symptoms that are unusual or severe, see your healthcare provider immediately. Be sure to let your healthcare provider know that you just returned from a trip outside the United States, and which countries you visited.

For More Information:

- Nevada State Health Division: 775-684-5900
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>