

Traveling Abroad

Stay Healthy While You Travel Abroad

Are you planning a trip or a study abroad for next semester? Before your trip, take time to prevent illness or injuries while you're away. A good place to start is by reviewing your vaccine records with your healthcare provider to be sure that your immunizations are up to date. Some countries require certain vaccinations for entry. Your healthcare provider can help you make sure your vaccination status meets the requirements of your destination. If you take prescription medication, be sure that you remember to take your medication along with you and make certain that you have an adequate supply. Carry your medication (in the original labeled container) with you rather than packing it in your luggage. If you wear glasses or contacts, consider bringing an extra pair or a copy of the prescription for your lenses.

Sun and Heat

Protection from the sun's harmful rays is important year round whether you're planning a trip to the beach or to the ski slopes. Protect your eyes by wearing wrap-around sunglasses that provide 100% UV ray protection. For your skin, wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen and lip screen with at least SPF 15. Remember that some medications can increase your sensitivity to the sun. To protect yourself from the sun and heat, try to avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Select clothes that are loose fitting but have a tight weave, and don't forget to bring a hat with a wide brim. Throughout the day, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol. Don't leave the sunscreen home on a cloudy day; UV rays will burn even on cloudy days. To read more about sun protection go to the CDC Travel health tips on [Sunburn Prevention](#).

Insects

Biting insects, like mosquitoes and ticks, are not only annoying, but they can also carry illnesses that make you sick. For adults, insect repellent should contain 30%-50% DEET or Picaridin, which is available in 7% and 15% concentrations but needs more frequent application. Insect repellent should be applied prior to your sunscreen. Permethrin is a repellent that can be applied to your clothes and is effective for up to two weeks. If you are traveling to a country that has malaria, there are medications that you can take to help prevent it. Schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider or a travel clinic at least one month before you plan to travel to get the proper prescriptions and vaccines. For more information on how to protect yourself see [Protection from Insects and Mosquitoes](#).

Traveler's diarrhea

Traveler's diarrhea (TD) is probably the most commonly encountered illness among international travelers. The best way to avoid TD is to be sure that the food and water you ingest is not contaminated. To read more about food and water safety when traveling abroad, check out the [Traveler's Health](#) website. The good news is that vaccines are available to help protect you against other food borne illnesses such as typhoid and Hepatitis A.

Illness Abroad

Prepare a small first-aid kit. Depending on your needs, you may want to include pain relievers such as Tylenol or ibuprofen, antacids, and an antidiarrheal such as Pepto-Bismol. Bring antibiotic creams and bandages for minor cuts and burns. Also include hydrocortisone cream and Benadryl if biting insects will be present. For more ideas and information see the [Traveler's Health Kit](#). If you are traveling in a country where traveler's diarrhea tends to occur, bring a package of powdered Gatorade to replenish electrolytes and fluids. Before going abroad, find out what medical services your health insurance will cover.

Behavior and Other Hazards

Tattooing, ear piercing, sharing shaving razors, using unsterilized needles for any injections including acupuncture, dental work, steroid and vitamin injections can increase the risk for infection with Hepatitis B and C and HIV. This also applies to having sex with multiple partners, intravenous drug users, or individuals whose HIV and Hepatitis B status is unknown. Alcohol and drugs can alter an individual's judgment. Animal bites and poisonous snakes are hazards in many parts of the world, so avoid handling animals and snakes. If you are walking at night, walk with a group of people.

Injuries

Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of death and disability in developed and developing countries. The risk in developing countries is 13 times higher than in the United States and is thought to be due to inadequate road signs, unskilled or inexperienced drivers, and inattention to pedestrians and cyclists.

Additional Information

Here are some helpful websites to check out before traveling:

- [Centers for Disease Control Traveler's Health](#)
- [Health Tips for Students Studying Abroad](#)
- [Travel Health Online](#)

Hofstra wellness Center (Student Health Services) can help you prepare for your trip.