



Introduction

What do travelers think about when planning to travel to a foreign country? Do thoughts turn to spectacular scenery, exotic foods, and the opportunity to experience another culture? Are there worries about diseases, insects, and water safety? Most of us consider both parts of the picture, excited about the good prospects and nervous about the bad. We wonder how to get the most out of travel while guarding against any health hazards that might exist. This guide is for those who want to enjoy the opportunities of travel without spending time and energy dealing with problems that could be prevented. We'll provide reliable explanations and practical ideas about the best ways to stay healthy while traveling abroad.

The threat of disease worldwide, although real, is often different from what many people expect. Ebola virus, cholera, yellow fever, avian influenza, and coronavirus may make headlines, but they rarely affect travelers. Other outbreaks like chikungunya or Zika virus may impact travelers for short periods of time in very specific places. This doesn't mean there is no cause for concern. It is important to take all reasonable precautions to reduce the chances of becoming ill. But the problems that are most likely to affect travel plans are much more

ordinary—traveler's diarrhea, jet lag, or an auto accident, for example.

Travelers who follow preventive behaviors can avoid most travel-related health and safety problems. This guide will present strategies that can be used to help reduce the risk of disease and injury while traveling. Some travelers may choose to follow all the advice carefully, especially if they are traveling in high-risk areas or have existing health concerns. Others may evaluate the risks and decide to follow only some of the precautions mentioned, based on individual needs.

Travelers spending time exclusively in developed countries, in resort areas of developing countries, or within the international hotel circuit will generally have a lower risk of illness.

Adventure travelers and persons staying abroad for extended periods of time (more than 1 month), spending a good deal of time with local populations, or eating and sleeping in rural accommodations are typically at higher risk; this is especially true for persons traveling in developing countries.

The illnesses that usually concern travelers are discussed under topics such as vaccines, general health and safety, water, food, insects, and physical contact. Additional

illnesses, rare in travelers, are summarized in alphabetical order.

Forms and checklists are available to help travelers evaluate and document their health and safety needs.

Resources: There are many resources available to help travelers find additional information about the areas they plan to visit. Some of the best are:

- TripPrep.com
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/travel
- International Society of Travel Medicine: www.istm.org
- U.S. Department of State: www.travel.state.gov