



HEALTH HINTS

for the International Traveler

IMMUNIZATIONS & MALARIA MEDICATION:

Before you travel: Contact your doctor, clinic, or local state health department regarding immunizations and malaria prophylaxis at least 6-8 weeks before travel. For more information about malaria, call your state health department or the Malaria Hotline at the Center for Disease Control in Georgia, (404) 639-1610.

After you return: Complete your malaria medication regimen if indicated. See your doctor if you develop the following symptoms within a year after leaving a malaria infected area: fever, chills, headache, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea. Tell your doctor that you were in a malarious area.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Obtain enough refills to last the entire trip. If you wear glasses or contacts, take along a second pair and take your lens prescription with you.

PHYSICIAN'S LETTER

If you take a narcotic or more than two medications, ask your physician for a letter that describes your medical condition and the need to carry needles and syringes for medical purposes.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Check your medical insurance to determine the extent of your coverage while abroad. If your insurance has territorial exclusions or if you are covered by MEDICARE, consider purchasing travel insurance that will pay for transportation to a U.S. hospital if you become seriously injured.

MEDICAL DIRECTORIES

The directory published by the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) contains lists of English-speaking doctors who are on duty 24 hours a day and have a set fee schedule. To obtain a directory, write:

IAMAT
417 Center Street
Lewiston, NY 14092

You can also get a list of doctors throughout the world by writing to:

World Medical Association
556 North State Street
Chicago, IL 60610

or
Cornell Medical Center
1300 York Avenue
New York, NY 10021

MEDICAL CARE ABROAD

If you have no directory and require medical attention, contact a major community hospital, medical school, or the local American Consulate or Embassy.

FIRST AID KIT:

- insect repellent (30% DEET)
- water disinfectant
- thermometer
- band-aids
- moleskin for blisters
- Pepto-Bismol or Immodium
- antacid
- aspirin or substitute
- cold & cough remedies
- mild laxative
- sunscreen or sunblock
- sunburn medication
- anti-fungal & anti-itch agents
- anti-bacterial cream or spray
- tweezers
- bee sting kit (if allergic)

CHOOSE THESE BEVERAGES:

- *Tea & coffee (made from boiled water)
- *Bottled/canned beverage-soft drinks, juices, beer, wine mineral water (break seal yourself)
- *Local water purified by you or that you know has been adequately chlorinated

CHOOSE THESE FOODS:

- *Well cooked meat, fish, rice, vegetables (eat while hot)
- *Fresh baked goods-breads, rolls, unfilled pastries
- *Raw fruits, vegetables, and nuts with intact skins and shells (peel yourself or soak in mild chlorine solution of 1/2 teaspoon chlorine bleach to a quart of water for 15 minutes and air dry on clean surface)

AVOID THESE BEVERAGES:

- the local water
- ice cubes made with local water
- drinks served by the glass
- all milk products

AVOID THESE FOODS:

- foods derived from milk
- raw fruits and vegetables not cleaned or peeled by you
- foods left standing at room temperature, e.g., buffet foods, cold meat platters, custards, filled pastries
- raw or undercooked meat, fish, shellfish
- foods prepared by street vendors

WATER PURIFICATION:

Heat Treatment - boil vigorously for 10 minutes (by far the most reliable method to make water of uncertain purity safe for drinking)

Chemical Treatment

1. Chlorine Bleach-use 4-6% concentrate, add two drops per quart or liter of clear water, double dosage for cloudy water, let stand 30 minutes.
2. Tincture of Iodine-two drops per quart or liter of clear water, double dosage for cloudy water, let stand 30 minutes.
3. Halazone-five tablets per quart or liter of clear water, let stand 30 minutes.

PREVENTING TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA:

In most developing countries, you must be careful about what you eat and drink. Poor sanitation, lack of refrigeration, and unchlorinated water can expose you to organisms that cause traveler's diarrhea and other problems. The guidelines listed in the boxes can help you make safe choices about the beverages and foods you consume.

TREATMENT FOR DIARRHEA:

1. Consume plenty of liquids to replace fluids and salts lost in watery stools and vomiting.
2. Avoid solid foods and dairy products for 24 hours.
3. Take Pepto-Bismol or Immodium to help reduce cramping and to control diarrhea when there are no bathrooms nearby, but follow label instructions and do not take these medications for more than 3 to 5 days. Use Pepto-Bismol with caution if you are taking aspirin or are sensitive to aspirin.

PREVENTING AIDS & OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES:

1. Use latex condoms during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Purchase condoms and a spermicide or water-based lubricant before you leave the United States.
2. Do not use intravenous drugs or share needles. Tattoos, acupuncture treatments, and injections for medical or dental procedures are risky because the equipment may be contaminated.
3. Avoid the use of locally-produced immune globulin and blood-clotting factors in countries where the blood supply is not routinely tested for communicable diseases. If a blood transfusion is necessary, contact the nearest American Embassy/Consulate for advice.

PROTECTION FROM INSECTS & PARASITES:

Mosquitoes- The best protection against malaria is "Don't get bitten!" Mosquitoes are most active during dusk and dawn, on cloudy days, and in shaded areas. Wear long-sleeved tops and long pants and use plenty of mosquito repellent containing at least a 30% concentration of DEET. Sleep under mosquito netting if your lodging has unscreened windows or doors.

Other insects- Always wear shoes to protect against hookworm, fungus, jigger flea, and other infections. Shake out your shoes before putting them on to get rid of insects.

Parasites- Avoid swimming or wading in fresh-water lakes and streams. They may be infested with a parasite that causes schistosomiasis, a disease that can damage your internal organs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Center for Disease Control offers information for determining whether special vaccinations are needed to visit a country, or to learn of any outbreaks of disease occurring in that country. The Hotline is: (404) 332-4559.

The International Traveller's Clinic at McFarland Clinic in Ames offers health information for the international traveller and immunizations. Tel: (515) 239-4400.

The Traveller's Clinic at the ISU Student Health Center provides immunizations and health information. Tel: (515) 294-5803.

View the twenty-five minute video *Bon Voyage and Good Health* located in the Study Abroad Center.