

UHS

TRAVEL CLINIC

How to prepare
for possible health
challenges when
traveling abroad



TRAVEL TUTORIAL

- **FOOD AND
WATER SAFETY**
- **TYPES OF
ILLNESS**
- **PERSONAL
SAFETY**
- **MEDICAL
INSURANCE**
- **TRAVEL
CHECKLIST**
- **COVID-19**
- **NEXT STEPS**

Tutorial takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

Country-specific recommendations are available from Trip Prep. You can also obtain country-specific destination information from the Centers for Disease Control.

FOOD AND WATER SAFETY

► **Many diseases are transmitted through food and water. Follow these preventive measures.**



**Food / Water
Borne Illnesses
Links**

[Cholera](#)

[Hepatitis A](#)

[Typhoid Fever](#)

[Polio](#)

[Traveler's
Diarrhea](#)

Safe beverage choices

Bottled water: Assure that the seal is intact.

Boiled water: Boil water for at least one minute to kill most disease-causing organisms.

Iodized water: Purify water with iodine crystals in liquid or tablet form. Add vitamin C, Kool-Aid, Gatorade powder, etc., to remove the flavor and odor of the iodine.

Canned beverages: Wipe the top of can with sanitizer and drink through a straw.

General Guideline

Avoid brushing your teeth or rinsing your contacts with faucet water. Avoid ice and frozen beverages (such as margaritas)—the freezing process does not kill the organisms.

Safe Food Choices

- Well-cooked meats, fish, veggies, preferably served piping hot
- Rice, beans, breads, and other baked goods like tortillas
- Fruits, nuts, veggies with thick skins or shells which you remove or peel yourself (such as bananas, cucumbers, peanuts in shells)
- Canned foods are safe unless the can is dented, swollen, or hisses when opened.

General Guideline

Boil it, cook it, peel it yourself, or forget it! It's best to avoid food if you're uncertain about its preparation.

Foods to Avoid

- Fruit salads made with fruit that you haven't peeled yourself
- Leafy green salads (such as lettuce, parsley or cilantro). Contaminated water can cling to these.
- Thin-skinned fruit that cannot be peeled (such as peaches, tomatoes, berries or grapes)
- Raw or undercooked meat, fish, or shellfish
- Unpasteurized dairy products (such as goat cheese, milk, or yogurt) can be a source of Brucellosis.

TYPES OF ILLNESS

► Changes in environment and altitude can impact your health.

Traveler's Diarrhea

This is common and can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites.

Prevention

- Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands for 20 seconds before and after eating.
- Pepto-Bismol® tablets: Available over-the-counter. Take 4 times per day for no more than three weeks, could cause temporary blackening of tongue and stools.
- Strict adherence to food and water precautions.

Treatment

- Return to eating when you feel up to it. Food is not essential for many days, but WATER is. Drink lots of purified water!
- Take an oral rehydration solution or rehydration salts mixture with you. These are available in pharmacies or camping stores. Dissolve in water and drink if there is a risk for dehydration.
- At your visit with the Travel Clinic, discuss the use of antibiotics and Imodium AD for moderate to severe diarrhea. Antibiotics will require a prescription.
- Seek medical care if you have persistent diarrhea for more than three days.

Insect Precautions



Mosquitoes can transmit a number of diseases. Discuss your risk for infection with a travel specialist to determine if you need prophylactic antibiotics or vaccinations.

- Apply insect repellent containing at least 30% DEET to exposed skin. Concentrations higher than 50% do not improve efficacy and may cause skin irritation. Avoid contact with synthetic material, such as Gortex, as it will damage the material. Cotton is okay.
- Wear a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, pants, and a hat to minimize exposed skin. Mosquitoes often bite below the knees. Tuck pants into socks.
- Spray or wash clothing, bedding, and screens with Permethrin. Do not apply to skin. Use mosquito netting if advised per country recommendations. You can usually purchase this in local markets in the country to which you're traveling.
- Reduce time spent outdoors at and after dusk when mosquitoes infected with Japanese encephalitis and malaria are most active. Day time mosquitoes carry Dengue and Yellow Fever.

Mosquito-Borne Illnesses Links

[Yellow Fever](#)

[Dengue Fever](#)

[Malaria](#)

[Japanese Encephalitis](#)

[Zika Virus](#)

[Chikungunya](#)

Some countries encourage the use of preventive antimalarial medications.

Antimalarial Medications

Medication	When to take	Side effects	Avoid if you have	Other considerations
Chloroquine (Aralen®)	1/week	Upset stomach, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, itching	Psoriasis	Not effective in many parts of the world
Malarone	1/day	Upset stomach, abdominal pain, headache, vomiting		For Chloroquine resistant countries
Doxycycline (Vibramycin®)	1/day	Upset stomach, (take with meals), sunburn (use sunblock and hat), yeast infections	During pregnancy	For Chloroquine resistance countries

TYPES OF ILLNESS *continued*

Blood, Body Fluid, Airborne, and other Illnesses

Many diseases can be transmitted through contact with blood and body fluids—including semen, vaginal secretions, and saliva—or the airspace of an infected person. Some infections, including rabies, can be transmitted from animals to people.



[Influenza](#) [Tuberculosis \(TB\)](#)

[Diphtheria](#) [Sexually Transmitted Infections \(STIs\)](#)

[Hepatitis B](#)

[Rabies](#) [Meningitis](#)

[HIV](#) [Meningococcal](#)

Prevention

- Make sure your tetanus shot is up-to-date. Consider a booster if more than five years have passed since your last shot.
- Do not get tattoos, piercings, or acupuncture while traveling. HIV and Hepatitis C are easily transmitted by contaminated needles or ink.
- Bring condoms from home. STIs are common worldwide.
- Do not touch or feed animals. They can carry infection, including rabies, which is fatal if not treated. If you are bitten by any animal, wash the area with soap and water for 15 minutes and get medical attention within 24 hours. Consider obtaining a rabies vaccine if you will have direct contact with animals or will not have accessible health care within 24 hours.

Altitude Sickness

If you plan to visit locations higher than 8,000 feet, you may experience altitude sickness.

Symptoms may include
- headache
- nausea
- fatigue

Prevent Altitude Sickness

-
- Do**
- Ascend slowly
 - Include rest days at intermediate altitudes
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Eat a diet high in carbohydrates
 - If you experienced symptoms in the past or have no time to acclimate, consider taking Acetazolamide (Diamox). It should be taken two to three days before ascent and for at least three days at highest elevation. This medication requires a prescription, discuss with a medical provider.
-
- Avoid**
- Overexertion during the first few days at a high altitude
 - The effects of alcohol and other medications may be increased at high altitude.
 - Avoid medications that decrease breathing rate. These include sleeping pills, tranquilizers and narcotic-based pain relievers.

Jet Lag

Jet lag is a temporary sleep disorder caused by rapid travel across three or more time zones.

Symptoms may include
- disturbed sleep
- fatigue
- irritability
- headache
- shortened attention
- poor concentration

How long does jet lag last?

East to West: number of days equal to two-thirds the number of time zones crossed

West to East: number of days equal to half the number of time zones crossed

Strategies to minimize jet lag symptoms:

- Force yourself into the sleeping routine of the new time zone. Go to bed 1–2 hours later for a few days before traveling eastward and shift the timing of sleep 1–2 hours earlier for a few days before traveling westward. Adjust meal times to coincide with these changes.
- Seek exposure to bright light in the **evening if traveling westward** and in the **morning if traveling eastward**.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after your flight.
- Sleep during long flights if possible.
- Avoid large, fatty meals, caffeine and alcohol during the flight.
- Minimize activity and avoid rich, spicy or heavy meals the day after your arrival.
- Take short naps, 20–30 minutes to increase energy but not undermine nighttime sleep.



PERSONAL SAFETY

► *While travel provides opportunities for unique experiences, be aware of the same risks and hazards you would be mindful of at home.*



Motor Vehicle Accidents

According to the World Health Organization, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of preventable death of travelers.

- Use safety belts when available.
- Avoid driving in rural areas after dark.
- Rent larger vehicles with seat belts and airbags.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Avoid riding in large vehicles that are overcrowded, overweight, or top-heavy.

Visit the Association for International Road Travel to learn more about road safety and country-specific driving risks.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Find out the laws of the country you're visiting. The minimum alcohol age may be younger than in the United States, but drug laws are often extremely strict.





MEDICAL INSURANCE

► ***Check your insurance policy coverage before you leave the United States. If you're not covered abroad, consider purchasing short-term, reliable international insurance.***



Most private medical insurances do not provide overseas coverage. Check with your insurance company prior to departure. Medical evacuation to the United States— or to a country with adequate health care— is very expensive and most insurance companies do not cover this. Consider purchasing short term, reliable international insurance.

For students and scholars affiliated with UW–Madison study abroad or exchange programs, international medical insurance is required and is usually included in your program fee.

For students volunteering outside of UW–Madison affiliated programs, review insurance options by searching online for “international medical insurance.” There are many reasonable choices, including International SOS and HTH Worldwide.





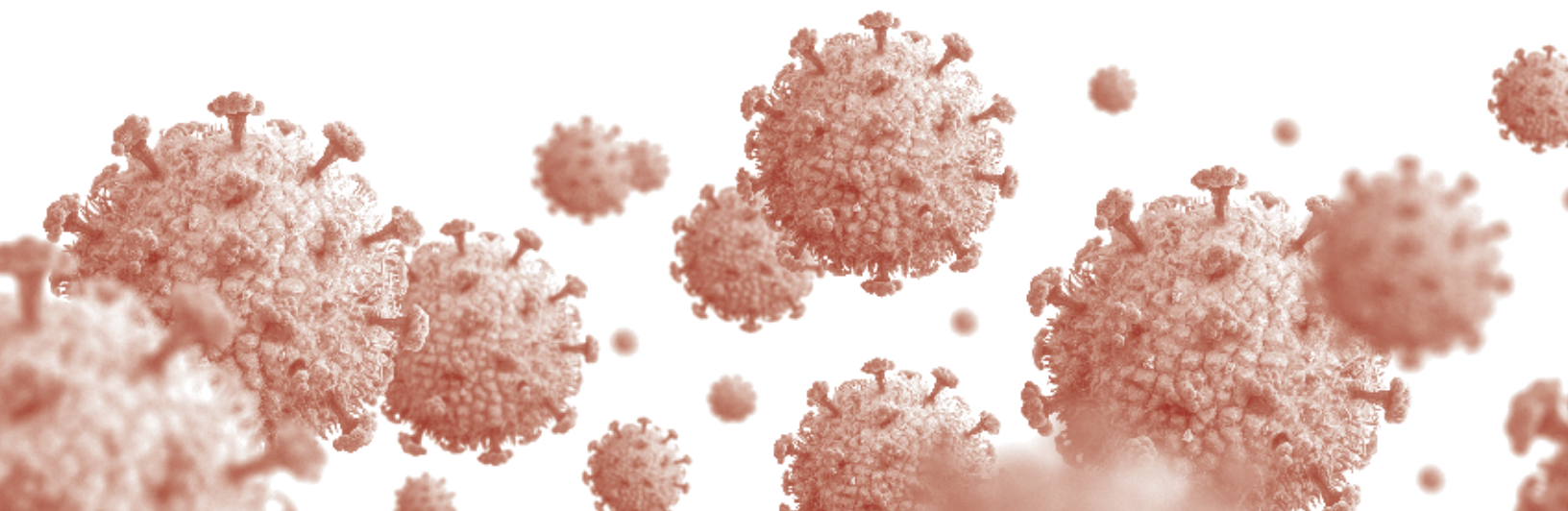
COVID-19

► **COVID-19 is still a significant issue in many parts of the world. Even if you're vaccinated, continue take precautions such as washing your hands often and using hand sanitizer.**



COVID-19 Recommendations and Restrictions

- CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 because travel increases your chance of getting and spreading the virus.
- Every country has entry procedures. Refer to CDC website for current recommendations specific to your travel destination.
- All air passengers coming to the U.S., including U.S. citizens and fully vaccinated people, are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result (no more than 3 days prior to flight departure) or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding a flight to the U.S.
- After international travel, the CDC does not require mandatory quarantine however they do recommend self-quarantine for unvaccinated travelers for 7 days (with a negative COVID-19 test) and for 10 days for those who don't get tested.



YOUR TRAVEL CHECKLIST

► **Be prepared. Many personal care items and over-the-counter medications available in the U.S. may be difficult to come by in other countries.**



Checklist

Pack enough tampons, pads, condoms, or other essential personal items. Feminine hygiene products may be hard to find and condoms may be counterfeit.

Consider wearing a medical alert bracelet if you have serious food allergies, insect reactions, or anything else that may cause a serious reaction.

Remember to take an EpiPen or other necessary medical supplies in case you experience an allergic reaction. Tell a co-traveler about the potential for a reaction.

Prescription Drugs and Over-The-Counter Medications

Take enough medication to last your entire trip. Consider medication for diarrhea, cramps, headaches, nausea, allergies, etc. Call your insurance company in advance to arrange a long-term supply of medicine if necessary. Most insurers have a “vacation plan.”

Bring medication in the original package with a prescription label that includes both the trade and generic name, if possible. Certain countries will not allow ADHD medications to be brought into the country.

Helpful Links

[CDC](#)

[International SOS](#)

[HTH Worldwide](#)

[CDC](#)

[Traveler's Health](#)

[UHS Traveler's Checklist](#)

►
Links to Specific Illnesses

Food/ [Cholera](#)

Water [Hepatitis A](#)

Borne [Typhoid Fever](#)

[Polio](#)

[Traveler's](#)

[Diarrhea](#)

Mosquito [Yellow Fever](#)

Borne [Dengue Fever](#)

[Malaria](#)

[Japanese](#)

[Encephalitis](#)

[Zika Virus](#)

[Chikungunya](#)

Blood/ [Influenza](#)

Body Fluid, [Diphtheria](#)

Airborne [Hepatitis B](#)

[Rabies](#)

[HIV](#)

[Tuberculosis \(TB\)](#)

[Sexually](#)

[Transmitted](#)

[Infections](#)

[Meningitis](#)

[Meningococcal](#)



Login to [MyUHS](#) to schedule an appointment and complete a travel questionnaire.