Health tip: Healthier travel

Before you travel[1]

- **Schedule an appointment with your PCP** to get destination specific vaccines and to discuss any health concerns you may have.
- **Make sure you are up to date on your routine vaccines** including measles-mumps-rubella. Infectious diseases such as measles can spread quickly in groups of unvaccinated people.
- **Consider travel insurance** if your health insurance does not cover medical care abroad (most plans don't), make sure you have a plan to get care overseas in case of unexpected health or travel issues.
- **Check travel advisories** for destination specific health risks and safety concerns. Visit **travel.state.gov** for the latest travel advisories.

Pack smart. A travel health kit is a good idea to bring with you when you travel. The CDC recommends filling your travel health kit with over-the-counter medicines and your prescriptions (enough to last your whole trip, plus a little extra), a first aid kit, insect repellent, sunscreen (SPF15 or higher), aloe for sunburns, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, water disinfection tablets, an extra pair of contact lenses or glasses if needed, a thermometer, and your health insurance card.

The CDC recommends not drinking tap water while traveling internationally. This includes swallowing water when showering or brushing your teeth. Brush your teeth with bottled or disinfected water. Try not to use ice in developing countries, as it was most likely made with tap water.[1]

During your trip[1]

- **Wash your hands regularly.** If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands before eating and drinking, after visiting food markets and after touching live animals.
- **Make sure to drink plenty of water** to prevent dehydration. Carry a water bottle with you so you always have water to drink.
- **Choose food that has been fully cooked** and served hot, as high heat kills most of the germs that cause travelers' diarrhea and other food-borne illnesses.
- **Get quality rest** to stay healthy and feel energized during your trip. If it's a business trip, getting adequate sleep will help you be productive and alert for your workday.

Tips to help reduce jet lag[2]

- **Arrive early.** Try to arrive at your destination 1 or 2 days before an important event or meeting to give your body time to adjust.
- **Get quality sleep** at least a few nights before your trip, including the night prior to your trip so that you are not already sleep deprived at the beginning of your trip.
- **Adjust to local time** by not sleeping until local nighttime. If you are very sleepy during the day, try to take short naps to help you feel better, yet still sleep at night.
- **Eat small meals** to avoid stomach problems. Time your meals with local mealtimes too.
- **Hydrate** with plenty of water before, during and after your flight to counteract the effects of dry cabin air. Dehydration may make jet lag symptoms worse. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, as these may dehydrate you and affect your sleep.

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