



## Personal Healthcare for Travel

### **Before The Trip**

Pre-Existing Medical Conditions: It is important that travelers have the best advice and care in planning for a productive and pleasant trip. If you plan to travel and have a pre-existing medical condition, consult your doctor four to six weeks before departure. It is beneficial to have your blood type identified, in case you need an urgent blood transfusion during your trip. Patients with chronic illnesses should bring an adequate supply of medication for the duration of the trip.

### **Travelers First Aid Kit**

- Prescription medication
- Anti-Diarrhea medication
- Motion sickness medication/bands
- Sleep Aid
- Eye Drops
- Antacid/Pepto Bismol
- Pain Relief
- Cold Remedies
- Antibiotic Ointment
- Insect repellent\* Opt for a longer-lasting lotion (Picaridin)
- Calamine Lotion
- Sunscreen
- Cortisone Cream
- Electrolyte Packets/Supplement
- Basic First Aid Items

## **During The Trip**

To maintain good health, be careful about the food and water you consume. Also, protect yourself against insect bites by applying repellent daily if you are visiting a country where mosquitoes can be a problem. Also, learn and follow the local automobile and traffic safety rules for pedestrians. Be prepared to alter travel plans en route.

If you need medical care, you can usually find medical care either by asking the hotel information staff or calling your country's consulate for the names of recommended doctors. You will usually find English-speaking doctors at university hospitals or major hospitals. ***If you need medical attention contact your trip leader immediately.***

## **Traveler's Diarrhea**

The most common cause of traveler's diarrhea, usually a self-limited illness of several days duration, is an infection with bacterial organisms such as E. coli, shigella, salmonella, campylobacter, and other bacteria. Viruses and parasites are less common causes of this disorder.

Travelers to areas with poor hygiene are advised to avoid uncooked foods, unwashed salads, unpeeled fruit, and unboiled tap water including ice. Oral rehydration is the cornerstone of the treatment of diarrhea. This can be accomplished by drinking water, tea, broth or carbonated beverages. In severe cases, travelers may need commercial oral rehydration fluid or intravenous fluids. It is very important to drink enough fluids to replenish the body's loss of water, salt, and sugar. Drink more than you think you lost. This compensates for the loss of water through the skin or respiration. Commercial oral rehydration packets may be used to ensure more rapid absorption.

For watery diarrhea, taking Pepto Bismol every 30 minutes, up to 8 doses may see a benefit. If diarrhea is severe, accompanied by blood, mucus, fever, and severe cramps, or lasts more than three days, consult a doctor. Proactive treatment with Pepto is a reasonable preventative action, but potential side effects such as hypersensitivity reactions such as skin rashes or hematologic reactions like agranulocytosis, must be considered.

If diarrhea persists or recurs, consult your doctor and ask to be checked for possible parasites.

## **Water / Food-Born Diseases**

These diseases include: typhoid fever, hepatitis, amebiasis, roundworms, tape-worms, Guinea worm, and other parasites. Preventive measures include avoiding the following sources:

- Avoid ice cubes, unless purified water was used.

- Uncooked vegetables and fruit: Wash well in clean or chlorinated water. It is best if you peel fruits yourself after washing them.
- Uncooked meat and poultry: Is safer to cook them well, to kill any germs such as salmonella or parasites such as tapeworm.

Creamy Desserts, Cheeses and Local Dairy Products: Make sure they are not spoiled.

## **HIV/AIDS**

AIDS (Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome) is a contagious disease caused by an organism called Human Immunodeficiency virus, or HIV for short. The disease destroys part of the body's ability to build immunity to illness. This leaves the body unable to defend itself against infections and certain kinds of cancers. HIV/AIDS knows no geographic, social, racial or cultural boundaries. However, you can protect yourself against this disease during your travels by knowing some simple rules. HIV/AIDS should NOT be feared or prevent travel to any part of the world.

HIV spreads more frequently through sexual activity. The virus can be transmitted from an infected person to his or her sexual partner. It is also spread by transfusion of infected blood, contaminated needles, or other skin-piercing and tattooing instruments. In addition, an HIV-infected mother can transmit the virus to her child before, during or shortly after birth. A breastfeeding HIV-infected mother can transmit it through nursing her child.

It is NOT spread by the following:

-Casual contact with a person, such as shaking hands, hugging, or sharing the same space.

-It is not spread by insect bites or contact with animals.

-It is not spread by sharing swimming pools, bathrooms, telephones, dishes, hugging, coughing or sneezing. You cannot get HIV/AIDS by living with someone with the virus unless by sexual contact.

## **Vaccines**

We recommend that you work with your physician and check with your local health department on vaccination suggestions and requirements before international travel.

Learn more at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)