

Health & Immunization Tips for Traveling Internationally

Now more than ever, we are committed to keeping you and our children safe as you travel. Remember that choosing to get up-to-date on your immunizations protects not only you, but also our children who are at great risk for contagious diseases. For example, did you know that many contagious diseases, such as Measles, are spread by coughing and sneezing? Did you know that hundreds of children die every day from Measles? Do you know that getting COVID vaccine to many of our staff and families is a great challenge? We need to protect them!

The pandemic has reminded us that we are a contributor to the health and safety for all of those around us. We appreciate your attention to the health and well-being of those we all love and serve. We will share with you the specific policies and most up to date information about COVID's impact on international travel as your trip grows closer. Here are a few key points to anticipate:

- Proof of full immunization may be required to visit our programs to meet the ever-changing regulations from the country's public health system and their Ministries of Education.
- Testing going into a country varies, we will update you on types of tests and timing as it gets closer to your departure.
- Each country will have mask and social distancing protocols. We ask that you be prepared and flexible so that we can respect and adhere to their policies.
- Remember our children and families are watching how are protecting them! Be a role model of safe health practices.

Immunizations: Set up a time with your local physician to see what immunizations you need to maintain currency on your "routine immunizations". If they are not equipped to provide routine immunizations, they should be able to direct you to a public health resource or an international health office. Remember that immunizations will be an additional expense, but you are protecting yourself and others. Again, now more than ever our children and staff are vulnerable and routine immunizations campaigns for normal childhood diseases have been limited.

- Have you had an annual flu shot?
- Have you had the DPT (tetanus, whooping cough [pertussis], and diphtheria shot?) in the past 10 years?
- What about the MMR [Measles, Mumps, and Rubella], or Chicken Pox; did you receive it as a child?
- Polio does still exist in the world; are you up to date?
- Hepatitis A requires two doses separated by six months; one dose is required before you travel.
- Hepatitis B requires three doses (second at one month and third at six months).

The Centers for Disease Control also have recommendations that require immunizations not needed in our country. We will provide you specific information about the country you will be visiting. You may be directed to a travel health clinic so plan ahead! The key to staying healthy is in your hands. Be careful what you eat, be careful what you drink, avoid contact with animals, be diligent about mosquitos and get immunized!

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- You should complete the **Typhoid** series because of contaminated water risk. Despite our best efforts to ensure team members only consume clean food and water, unintended exposure could still happen.
 - With the injection, you need to wait two weeks to travel, and you need a booster every two years. Currently, this the only available option.
 - Plan ahead and remember you still need to be careful about what you eat and drink!

Mosquitos! Mosquito protection is another challenge and brings with it a variety of diseases that we do not face in the United States. Remember the key to your safety is being diligent with protecting yourself from mosquitos. If you are going to a country where Malaria is a risk, you will need to consult your physician or travel health office for the appropriate medication. Your team leaders will share this risk information with you at your early meetings.

- If lodging/guest house does not have air conditioning or windows and doors with secure, intact screens you may be at higher risk. You should take precautions like using repellent, mosquito netting, and killing any visible mosquitoes.
- To optimize protection against mosquitoes and reduce the risk of mosquito-transmitted diseases:
 - Wear a lightweight long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and socks.
 - Apply lotion, liquid, or spray repellent to exposed skin.
 - Ensure adequate protection during times of day when mosquitoes are most active; remember mosquitos that carry diseases bite mainly from dawn to dusk.
 - Reapply repellents as protection wanes before mosquitos start to bite.
 - Use any of these CDC recommended products:
 - **DEET** --Products containing DEET include, but are not limited to, Off!, Cutter, Sawyer, and Ultrathon.
 - **Picaridin** --Products containing picaridin include, but are not limited to, Cutter Advanced, and Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus.
 - **Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)** or **PMD** --Products containing OLE and PMD include, but are not limited to, Repel and Off! Botanicals.
 - **IR3535** (chemical name-- Products containing IR3535 include, but are not limited to, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Expedition and SkinSmart.

If you get bit!

- Avoid scratching mosquito bites and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce itch.
- Watch for symptoms:
 - Chikungunya Virus' most common symptoms are a fever and joint pain and usually begin within three to seven days.
 - Dengue Fever usually has a high fever with severe headaches, severe pain behind the eyes, joint pain, muscle or bone pain, a rash and/or mild bleeding (bloody nose, easy bruising, etc.).

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- Zika Virus usually has fever, rash, joint pain, and irritated or red eyes ("pink eye" or conjunctivitis). Muscle pain and headache can also be signs. Zika is usually mild and lasts just a few days or up to 1 week. Usually a person with Zika virus is not sick enough to need to go to a hospital.
- Malaria, dengue, chikungunya, and other illnesses can have similar signs as Zika.
- If you experience any of these symptoms, connect with your physician and indicate you have been in a country with mosquito borne diseases.

Challenges with your Gastrointestinal System (Traveler's Diarrhea) Again the key is prevention! Take care in what you eat and what you drink. Double check that the water has been filtered according to our standards to assure that there is no risk for bacteria, viruses and/or parasites. Some travelers do take along "prophylactic antibiotics". The type of antibiotic varies by region and requires a prescription; your health care provider will help you to determine if the choice makes sense for you and what is the best antibiotic to take or carry with you on the trip.