

## **Health Guidance Checklist for International Travelers, Tourists, and Missionaries**

All travelers should visit their health care provider and/or travel clinic prior to taking international trips.

### **Items to discuss at or prior to your visit with your health care provider:**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention makes specific recommendations for different countries around the world. For specific recommendations for your destination, visit: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.aspx>.
- Ensure that ALL your vaccinations are up to date. This is very important because some diseases like measles and mumps are more common in other countries. For vaccine recommendations, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/>.
- Do you have at least 30 days worth of routine prescription medication to take with you?
- If you do become ill while traveling abroad, contact the United States Embassy for names and addresses of local doctors. For contact information for the United States Embassy in your country of travel, visit: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>.

Additional health and safety information is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/yellowbook/home-2010.aspx>.

### **General Travel Health Kit Supplies**

A variety of pre-packaged health kits is commercially available; however, similar kits can be assembled at home, often at lower cost. Remember, some medications such as antibiotics will need a doctor's prescription. Health kit contents should be developed, based on destination, duration of travel, type of travel, and the traveler's pre-existing medical conditions. Some things to consider include:

#### **Medications**

- For pain or fever (one or more of the following, or an alternative):
  - Acetaminophen, aspirin, and/or ibuprofen
- For upset stomach or diarrhea:
  - Over-the-counter anti-diarrheal medication such as loperamide or bismuth subsalicylate
  - Antibiotic for treatment of moderate to severe diarrhea (Discuss with your health care provider about when to use.)
  - Mild laxative
  - Antacid
- Items to treat other symptoms:
  - Antihistamine
  - Decongestant, alone or in combination with antihistamine
  - Cough suppressant/expectorant
  - Throat lozenges
- Anti-motion sickness medication.
- Any medications, prescription or over the counter, taken on a regular basis at home.

#### **Other Important Items**

- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater)
- Mosquito repellent
- Water purification tablets
- Antibacterial hand wipes or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- Useful items in certain circumstances:
  - Extra pair of contacts or prescription glasses, or both, for people who wear corrective lenses
  - Mild sedative such as zolpidem, other sleep aid, or anti-anxiety medication

## When prescription medications are carried while traveling, it is important to remember the following:

---

- Keep medications in their original containers:** All medications should be carried in their original containers with clear labels, so the contents are easily identified. Although many travelers like placing medications into small containers or packing them in the daily-dose containers, officials at ports of entry may require proper identification of medications.
- Prescriptions:** Travelers should carry copies of all prescriptions, including their generic names.
- Physician notes:** For controlled substances and injection medications, travelers are advised to carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery describing the need and use of these medications.
- Restricted medications:** Travelers should be aware that certain medications are not permitted in certain countries. If there is a question about these restrictions, particularly with controlled substances, contact the embassy or consulate of the destination country.
- Availability:** A travel health kit is useful only when it is available. It should be carried with the traveler while traveling (e.g., in a carry-on bag). However, due to airline security rules, some sharp objects, liquids, and gels may need to be placed in checked luggage.

## Travel Checklist:

---

### Before you go:

- Learn about your destination country, taking note of health risks in the area.
- Check with your health insurance provider regarding medical coverage during international travel.
- Make a copy of any important documents that you may need, including your immunization card.
- Get your routine medical and dental check-up, especially if the trip abroad is greater than a couple of weeks.

### During your trip:

- Wash your hands with soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid unnecessary contact with domestic and wild animals.
- Use sunscreen (SPF 15 or above).
- Prevent mosquito and other bug bites by using insect repellent and wearing long sleeves and pants when outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito net when appropriate.
- Drink only bottled water or carbonated drinks in sealed containers in developing countries.
- Eat only food that has been thoroughly cooked and served hot.
- Avoid eating food from street vendors.

### When you return:

- If you are not feeling well, experience any unusual symptoms (fever, rash, cough, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.), or have been injured during your trip, seek medical attention and tell your health care provider where you have been.
- If you become sick with symptoms such as fever, chills, sweats, headaches, nausea, vomiting, body aches, malaise, etc. upon returning from malaria-risk areas, promptly seek medical treatment.