



For Immediate Release:

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International Travelers Health Guide

Those going abroad should follow tips to avoid potential health risks and enjoy summer travel

LOS ANGELES – The first rule of safe traveling is to know your destination. Whether you are traveling for work or you are a new graduate looking to explore the world, you need to be informed about travel restrictions, warnings, and potential concerns. The Los Angeles County Health Officer is encouraging all residents with travel plans to get up-to-date on recommended immunizations and stay informed of potential health concerns before their trip.

“Many vaccine-preventable diseases which are not often seen in the U.S. are still common in other parts of the world,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “Travelers should take extra precautions to stay healthy so they can fully enjoy their trip. If traveling abroad, check with your doctor to be sure you have all recommended routine and travel vaccines 4 to 6 weeks prior to travel. And, wash hands often, cover those coughs and sneezes, and as hard as it is to hear, if you are sick, don’t get on that plane until you are well.”

Be aware of travel health concerns by speaking with your primary health care provider prior to going abroad. Depending on your destination and medical history, you may need to take special health precautions such as vaccines or medications. Below are several common travel health topics to consider before embarking on your travel adventures:

Avoid Bug Bites:

- Protect yourself from mosquitoes, ticks, and flies by covering exposed skin and using insect repellent.
- Repellants containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of eucalyptus, when used as labeled, are effective defenses against insects.
- Speak to your doctor about appropriate medications or vaccines to protect yourself from diseases transmitted by insects.

Be Safe Around Animals:

- Avoid being bitten, scratched, or licked by any animal. Consult your doctor about rabies vaccination if you might come in contact with animals in high risk areas.

Deep Vein Thrombosis and Pulmonary Embolism:

- During travel, especially long flights, get up occasionally and walk around.
- Exercise your calf muscles and stretch your legs while you're sitting.
- Talk to your doctor before traveling, if you have additional concerns.



Food and Water Safety:

- If traveling to developing countries, eat food that is cooked and served hot, fruits and vegetables you have washed in clean water or peeled yourself, and pasteurized dairy products.
- Drink water, sodas, or sports drinks that are bottled and sealed.
- Drink water that has been disinfected (boiled, filtered, treated) and ice made with bottled or disinfected water.
- Speak to your doctor about appropriate vaccinations.
- Wash your hands!

Health Care Abroad:

- The US embassy in your destination country (<http://www.usembassy.gov/>) can help you locate medical services and will notify your family and friends in the event of an emergency. Consider registering with the US embassy in your destination country prior to travel. When selecting a doctor, make sure that he or she can speak your language.
- Bring any medications you may need.
- Beware of counterfeit medications sold in other countries.
- Only buy medications from licensed pharmacists and get a receipt.
- Consider travel health or medical evacuation insurance.

Road Safety:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among healthy travelers.
- Wear seat belts and use car seats for children as appropriate.
- Avoid driving at night; avoid driving motorcycles.
- Ride in marked taxis.
- Be familiar with local traffic laws before driving.
- Never drink and drive.

Safe Swimming and Diving:

- Learn about the local water conditions, currents, and rules before entering the water.
- Swim when lifeguards are on duty. Use proper gear and safety equipment.
- Never swim alone or in unfamiliar waters.
- Do not drink alcohol before or during swimming.
- Do not dive in shallow water.
- Always supervise children closely.

Sun Exposure:

- Stay in the shade, cover exposed skin, and wear sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection.
- Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 and UVA and UVB protection liberally at least 20 minutes before sun exposure, every two hours, and each time you get out of the water or sweat heavily.
- Keep newborns out of the sun. Sunscreen may be used on babies six months and older.
- Drink plenty of fluids.



Public Health News

For more information about travel health topics and advice, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>. To find a travel vaccine provider, call the LA County Information Line at 2-1-1 or visit the Public Health Immunization Program webpage at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/index.htm>, and click on “Travel Immunizations.”

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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