



## Introduction



What do you think about when you are planning travel to a foreign country? Do you imagine spectacular scenery, exotic foods, and the opportunity to experience another culture? Or do you worry about diseases, insects, and water safety? Most of us consider both parts of the picture, excited about the good prospects and nervous about the bad. We wonder how to get the most out of travel while guarding against any health hazards that might exist. This guide is for those who want to enjoy the opportunities of travel without spending time and energy dealing with problems that could be prevented. We'll provide you with reliable explanations and practical ideas about the best ways to stay healthy while you are abroad.

The threat of disease worldwide, although real, is often different from what many people expect. Cholera epidemics, yellow fever, and outbreaks of plague may make headlines, but they rarely affect travelers. This doesn't mean there is no cause for concern. It is important to take all reasonable precautions to reduce your chances of becoming ill. But the kind of problems that are most likely to upset your travels are much more ordinary—traveler's diarrhea, jet lag, or an auto accident.

If you follow preventive behaviors you can avoid most travel-related health and safety problems. This guide will present many techniques you can use to help reduce your risk of disease and injury while traveling. Some of you may choose to follow all the techniques carefully, especially if you are traveling in high-risk areas or if you have existing health concerns. Others may evaluate the risks and decide to follow only some of the precautions mentioned, based on your particular needs.

Those spending time exclusively in developed countries, in resort areas of developing countries, or within the international hotel circuit will generally have a lower risk of illness.

Adventure travelers and persons staying abroad for extended periods of time (more than 1 month), spending a good deal of time with local populations, or eating and sleeping in rural

accommodations are typically at higher risk. This is especially true for persons traveling in developing countries.

The illnesses that usually concern travelers are discussed under topics such as vaccines, health and safety, water, food, insects, and physical contact. Additional illnesses, rare in travelers, are summarized in alphabetical order.

Forms and checklists help you evaluate and document your health and safety needs.

## RESOURCES

There are many resources available to help you find additional information about the areas you plan to visit. Most bookstores and libraries have travel sections where you can browse for facts on climate, geography, political conditions, disease risks, and other concerns. There are also many sites on the Internet where you can find free, detailed, and current information. Some of the best are:

***Travel Health Online:***

[www.tripprep.com](http://www.tripprep.com)

***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:*** [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

***World Health Organization:***  
[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

***International Society of Travel Medicine:*** [www.istm.org](http://www.istm.org)

***U.S. Department of State:***  
[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)