



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People.™

Long-Term Travelers & Expatriates

If you are going to be spending a long time in a foreign country—to go to school or to work, for example—have a plan to protect your health while you're away from home.

Find a Doctor at Your Destination

Before you go, get checkups from your regular doctor and dentist to make sure everything's in good shape. You still might need care while you're gone, so plan in advance where you'll go if you get sick or are hurt. You might also want to consider getting travel health and evacuation insurance to pay for care, if you need it.

In some countries, there might be a risk of getting counterfeit medicines, so if you take any medicine routinely (such as drugs for high blood pressure or an asthma inhaler), consider bringing a supply from the United States. If you are going to be in another country a long time, make a plan with your doctor about how you will get refills of your medicines.



Avoid Injuries

The number one cause of preventable death in travelers is injuries, particularly traffic accidents. Always wear a seatbelt, be careful when crossing the street (especially in countries where they drive on the left), and try not to be on the road at night in developing countries. Another major cause of death is drowning, so take precautions when swimming, diving, or boating.

Get Vaccinated

Talk to your doctor about what shots you might need to prepare for your trip. You might need booster shots of routine vaccines or travel-related vaccines, depending on your destination. If you think you might travel to surrounding countries while you're gone, tell your doctor—other vaccines might be recommended for those areas.

Prevent Other Diseases

Not all diseases can be prevented by vaccines, so take other measures to protect yourself. Many diseases are spread by mosquitoes or other bugs, so try to avoid being bitten—wear insect repellent when outside, and only open windows if they have screens. If your doctor prescribes a drug to prevent malaria, make sure you take enough for your entire trip, and take it the entire time you are in a malaria risk area.

Travelers' diarrhea is very common in long-term travelers. Be careful about what you eat and drink, and ask your doctor about taking an antibiotic in case you do get sick.

HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases are a risk for long-term travelers, so if you have sex, you should use a condom every time. Bring condoms with you from the United States, since those sold in other countries may not be up to US standards.

Protect Your Mental Health

Being in another culture, especially if you do not speak the language, and away from family and friends can be stressful. Take care of your mental as well as physical health by eating healthfully and exercising regularly. Take along photos of family and friends, and stay in close contact with loved ones at home (see Mental Health & Travel).

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