

Allergy Consultants, P.A.

Specialists in Pediatric and Adult Allergy, Asthma, and Sinus Disease

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INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS

GENERAL CONCEPTS

The key to staying healthy while traveling is awareness of the potential problems. Knowledge is the key to preventing trouble. Be aware of cultural differences – in some third world countries the training of the health care workers can be very different from what you have experienced at home. Ask questions - if a medicine sounds strange to you, it probably is. Usually you can call your doctor at home for information and verification of any proposed treatment, and if any question is on your mind, you should. Take appropriate medical insurance with you. Have all dental work done before departure. Take extra supply of all your medications. Do not be adventuresome in your eating – stay with restaurants endorsed by people you trust. Keep your immunizations current, especially **Tetanus** (every 10 years), **Whooping Cough** and **Polio** (adults usually need a booster – children are usually current). For traveling in some areas you may require vaccines for **Yellow Fever** (every 10 years), **Hepatitis A** (6 month protection), and **Typhoid** (every 3 years). In some areas we may recommend **Rabies**, **Meningococcal** and **Flu** vaccines- adults should have **Polio Booster** for travel in Africa and parts of Asia.

SPECIFICS

1. Make a **photocopy** of all important documents like your **passport photo/ information page**, credit cards, driver license number, and medical information including our telephone number, home physician telephone numbers and keep one copy at home and one copy with you. This will be very helpful **if your passport is ever lost or stolen**. Keep this with your medical history –immunization – medication sheet.
2. In Third World countries/conditions, **do not drink the water** – keep hydrated with bottle water, bottled soda, filtered water, and tea and coffee should be safe. Avoid iced drinks, salads, or eat fruits or vegetables that cannot be peeled, or thoroughly cooked. Follow this simple rule: **boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it**.
3. Prevent mosquito bites. Use DEET (35-40%) containing insect repellants (**Ultrathon made by 3M**), (ALTERNATIVES – Deep Woods Off, or Repel – spray on clothing). A non DEET alternative is **Cutter Advanced**. Do take your Malaria pills if recommended. Malaria is serious and travelers are susceptible. Remember to take your malaria pills even when home if recommended.
4. If at all possible, avoid needles, injections, and transfusions. Try to transfer out if you become ill if possible. For emergency evacuation insurance, **International SOS Assistance**, 800-523-8930, or **TravMed**, 800-732-5309 or **insuremytrip.com**. For up to date U.S. State Department warnings and advisories check out **travel.state.gov**. You can also register your trip with the State Department at **<https://travelregistration.state.gov>**.
5. Do not swim in fresh water (can get **schistosomiasis**).
6. Do not play with or pet stray dogs, cats, monkeys, baboons or any animal (**rabies** and **plague**). Ask about rabies vaccination if you might have extensive outdoor exposure in rural are
7. Western trained-English speaking physicians can be found by joining the International

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Society of Travel Medicine iamat.org or istm.org (free membership).

- 8 If taking a long plane trip, and no history of bleeding or gastrointestinal problems (adults only) consider taking one **80 mg aspirin** before flying (not if you have bleeding or ulcer type disorders). Do stretch and walk the aisle while on the plane.
9. Medications purchased in third world pharmacies are often **counterfeit!** Fill sufficient quantities of all meds to take for your trip, plus a few extra days – just in case of delays. If you are taking prescription medications, carry along a copy of the prescription, including the generic name for medicines. If you are carrying any controlled substances or injectable medicines, carry a note on letterhead stationery from your doctor to explain your reasons for having this medicine.
10. **Use seat belts** and appropriate child seats. **Car accidents** are the #1 fatal injury for Americans abroad!

GENERALITIES

1. Take **no expensive jewelry or watches**, and travelers are better off with very simple clothes. No prizes for best dressed!
2. One or two credit cards are enough. (American Express and/or Visa e.g.). Charge your expenses when possible. If possible, get money at ATM machines – small amounts only. Hide some cash. Keep some cash available and easily accessible. Always keep your wallet/pocketbook in a safe place.
3. Pack everything you think you will need, and then try to delete half of it. You will be lugging it, and no one will give you a prize for being the best dressed.
4. Keep a sense of humor. Your pickpocketing saga will make a great story when you get back. Expect all flights to be delayed. Take some snack food for the flight.
5. Keep a diary for yourself. Take some good paper backs for reading. Plan on leaving books/clothes abroad.
6. Get your will, medical powers of attorney and other paperwork in order, and have them readily available for faxing should you need them.

TRAVELERS' HEALTH KIT

There are two main reasons to take your own health kit: to treat minor health problems as they occur and to treat exacerbations of pre-existing medical conditions. Personalize your kit to your specific needs but consider the following:

Important: Any liquid or aerosol over 3 ounces in your carry-on luggage will be confiscated!!! Unless essential, these items should be in your checked baggage.

Epinephrine auto injectors can be carried with a doctor's note.

1. Antidiarrheal medications-**Azithromycin (Zithromax) 500 mg once/d for 3 days, and Imodium AD 2 mg**, OTC after each loose stool to a maximum of 16 mg. (8 pills/day).
2. Personal prescription medications including copies of all prescriptions with the generic names of medications (almost all countries know “Amoxicillin” but rarely will they recognize “Trimox” the trade name). Take a note from your own physician on his letterhead stationary for controlled substances and injectable medications.
3. Antimalarial medications if required.
4. Antihistamine (Claritin, Benadryl e.g.)
5. Decongestant (Afrin Nose Spray)
6. Acetaminophen or aspirin or Advil.
7. 1% Hydrocortisone cream – for general rash, sunburn. Bacitracin Ointment for minor skin infections.
8. Anti-bacterial hand wipes.

Be adventurous, but safety first. Do whatever you can to avoid illness while traveling. Make new friends. **Have a Great Trip!**