

Protect Yourself From Illnesses and Infections While Traveling

June 24, 2019 | AdventHealth



Choose the health content that's right for you, and get it delivered right in your inbox

Subscribe Now

Many of us use the warm summer season to step away from work and home responsibilities and explore the world. And while that may sound like a dream, it's important to exercise a bit of extra caution to ensure you stay healthy and safe when you're on the go.

Being in tight quarters with so many others — like in airplanes, airports, buses, trains and ticket stations — makes you more susceptible than usual to any airborne illnesses or conditions spread by germs.

Travel to other countries can also expose you to potential dangers that aren't always top-of-mind when planning the trip of a lifetime. You may be more likely to get an infection in other countries for various reasons, including:

- Fewer vaccinated people, making infectious diseases more common
- Poor infrastructure, leading to contaminated food and water
- Warmer weather, which allows bacteria, parasites and mosquitos to thrive

Aside from the flu or a cold, the most common conditions contracted during travel are infections such as food poisoning from contaminated foods and diarrheal diseases from contaminated water. While these conditions usually aren't serious, they can worsen, and even become dangerous, if your body gets dehydrated.

Other common diseases include fevers, like yellow fever or dengue fever, often spread through mosquitos or other insect bites. If you get any of these conditions, controlling the fever is vital to preventing serious complications.

Learn more about the common illnesses and infections that can happen during travel, so you can best protect yourself from being "bitten by a travel bug."

Recognize the Symptoms

You're likely familiar with cold and flu symptoms. But would you recognize symptoms of infection or parasitic illnesses?

Symptoms from an infection generally appear within a few hours or days. However, in some cases, infection symptoms can appear much later than you'd think — like after you've already returned home.

If you experience food poisoning or diarrheal disease, you may have symptoms such as:

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Fevers, viral illnesses, or parasitic illnesses may cause symptoms like:

- Fever
- Headache
- Pain
- Rash
- Respiratory infection

If you've traveled to another country recently and experience these symptoms, see your primary care physician.

Be Prepared, Take Preventive Measures

Prevention starts before you even leave the country. At least eight weeks before your departure, you should see your primary care physician or a physician who specializes in travel medicine. Your doctor can help you:

- Get a prescription for medicines that can prevent illness
- Learn about food and water precautions that can keep you safe
- Receive any special vaccinations (like yellow fever)
- Update your vaccinations

While traveling, you should also take precautions such as:

- Avoiding swimming in freshwater
- Drinking only bottled water
- Preparing food yourself or only eating at trusted restaurants
- Sleeping beneath mosquito nets
- Taking any preventive medicines your doctor prescribes
- Washing your hands often
- Wearing mosquito repellent

Get Treatment and Diagnosis When Needed

You may need to see a doctor who specializes in infectious diseases for diagnosis and treatment of travel-related infections. Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and where you've traveled recently.

Based on your symptoms, the doctor may take stool and blood samples to test in a lab. These tests can reveal what infection you have.

Treatment Options

Treatment for travel infections can vary widely depending on the condition and how severe it is. You may be able to receive care at home or may need to be admitted to a hospital.

Your doctor might use medicines, including antibiotics or antifungal medicines, to treat your condition. Other medicines, like acetaminophen, can help low fever and control pain.

If you have a diarrheal disease or experience vomiting, it's important that you drink water, electrolyte sports drinks or broths to help replenish your fluids and prevent dehydration.

Know Where to Go for Travel Care

If you're feeling ill after traveling, speak to your primary care physician. If necessary, your PCP may recommend you visit an infectious disease physician.

If your primary care physician is not available, visit your closest Centra Care urgent care center. [Learn more about AdventHealth urgent care and find the nearest location to you.](#)

Recent Blogs

Blog [Staying in the Game: How to Prevent Overuse Injury](#) June 29, 2021

Blog [Staying in the Game: How to Prevent Overuse Injury](#) June 28, 2021

Blog [How Playing a Sport Can Improve Your Mental Health](#) June 30, 2021

Blog [What to Expect at a Prostate Screening \(It's Not as Bad as You Think\)](#) June 28, 2021

Blog [Breastfeeding Tips for Working Moms](#) June 26, 2021

View More Articles

More About AdventHealth

- Who We Are
- Our Services
- Find Doctors
- News and Blog
- Research and Innovation
- Find a Location
- Patient Resources

Quick Links

- Pay Your Bill
- Price Estimates
- Schedule Appointment
- Video Visits
- Contact Us

Information About

- Careers
- Nursing Careers
- Mission and History
- Foundation
- Community Benefit
- CREATION Life
- Legal
- Employees
- Physician Portal
- Vendor Supplier Resources

