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Flu (influenza): Travel health advice

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Risk to travellers

Seasonal flu is present worldwide.

Flu season usually runs from November to March in the northern hemisphere, and from April to October in the southern hemisphere.

Flu circulates year-round in the tropics.

Check the travel advice and advisories page for your destination before travelling:

[Travel advice and advisories by destination](#)

Recommendations

Before your trip

Talk to a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably 6 weeks before travelling.

There are things you can do to protect yourself and others from the flu.

- Get your annual flu vaccine (flu shot) at least 2 weeks before travelling.
 - It generally takes about 2 weeks for immunity to develop after vaccination.
- Avoid travelling if you have flu-like symptoms.
- Be aware that flu vaccines in Canada may not be effective against current flu strains in the southern hemisphere.
 - Similarly, flu vaccines in the southern hemisphere may not protect you from current flu strains in Canada.

Learn more:

- [Travel vaccinations](#)

During your trip

Consider wearing a well-fitting mask or respirator.

This is especially important in riskier situations, such as when you're around many people, including travellers in airports or train stations.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow, not your hand. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible, preferably in a lined waste container.

Clean your hands regularly.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Keep a bottle of hand sanitizer with you when you travel.

If your hands look dirty, you should wash them with soap and water instead of using hand sanitizer.

Learn more:

- [Clean your hands to help reduce the spread of infectious diseases](#)

People at higher risk

If you're at higher risk of flu complications and you develop symptoms while travelling, call a health care provider. Before making an in-person appointment, tell them about your symptoms and follow their advice.

After your trip

If you're concerned about flu symptoms that develop after your trip, call a health care provider. Before you make an in-person appointment, tell them about your symptoms and recent travel history.

They may advise you on how to prevent spreading the flu to others.

Learn more:

- [Flu prevention and risks](#)
- [Flu symptoms and treatment](#)

Related links

- [Travel health kit](#)
- [Tips for healthy travel](#)
- [Travel health insurance](#)
- [Travel health information](#)
- [If you become sick or injured while travelling outside Canada or after your return](#)

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