

Title:

What You Need to Know About Your Health in Advance of Travel

Word Count:

488

Summary:

No one wants to get sick while they are on vacation.

Keywords:

medical, health, medications, abroad, information, required, insurance, cdc, hospital, united states, eyeglasses

Article Body:

All travelers should familiarize themselves with conditions at their destination that could affect their health (high altitude or pollution, types of medical facilities, required immunizations, availability of required pharmaceuticals, etc.). While some of this information may be found in the documents listed above, the key resource for health information is the Travelers' Health page of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website.

The CDC website also provides general guidance on health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect-bite protection. The CDC also maintains an international travelers' hotline at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or, by fax, at 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299).

General guidance on vaccinations and other health precautions may be found on the Travelers' Health page of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website.

Insurance, Medicare & Medicaid, Medical Evacuation

Obtaining medical treatment and hospital care abroad can be expensive, and medical evacuation to the U.S. can cost more than \$50,000. Note that U.S. medical insurance is generally not accepted outside the United States, nor do the Social Security Medicare and Medicaid programs provide coverage for hospital or medical costs outside the United States.

If your insurance policy does not cover you abroad, it is a good idea to consider purchasing a short-term policy that does. There are health insurance policies designed specifically to cover travel. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred

overseas including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

Bringing Medications or Filling Prescriptions Abroad

A traveler going abroad with a preexisting medical problem should carry a letter from the attending physician, describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including the generic names of prescribed drugs. Any medications being carried overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled.

Travelers should check with the foreign embassy of the country they are visiting to make sure any required medications are not considered to be illegal narcotics. Foreign embassy and consulate contact information can also be found on the Country Specific Information for each country.

If you wear eyeglasses, take an extra pair with you. Pack medicines and extra eyeglasses in your hand luggage so they will be available in case your checked luggage is lost. To be extra secure, pack a backup supply of medicines and an additional pair of eyeglasses in your checked luggage.

If you have allergies, reactions to certain medications, foods, or insect bites, or other unique medical problems, consider wearing a "medical alert" bracelet. You may also wish to carry a letter from your physician explaining required treatment should you become ill.

Doctors and Hospitals

If an American citizen becomes seriously ill or injured abroad, a U. S. consular officer can assist in locating medical services and informing family or friends. If necessary, a consular officer can also assist in the transfer of funds from the United States. (Note, however, that payment of hospital and all expenses is the responsibility of the traveler.)