

The Basics of Travel Medicine

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As the 10 Tips for Healthy Travelling by the International Society of Travel Medicine (www.istm.org) illustrates, travel medicine is interdisciplinary and by no means limited to infectious diseases. Aspects of public health, physiology, paediatrics, psychiatry, etc. often need to be considered. Based on evidence from epidemiological data, recommendations are made mainly on preventive measures and self-treatment abroad:

Before travelling

Consult a travel medicine specialist at least one month before travelling.

Ask about special vaccines recommended for specific destinations.

Carry a first-aid and medical kit with regular and special medicines for the trip in your hand luggage.

Evacuation and travel insurance to cover health emergencies while abroad.

While travelling

Take precautions against malaria if visiting areas at risk. Prevent mosquito bites and take malaria tablets as advised.

Road safety is important - wear a seatbelt in a car, a helmet on a bicycle and avoid driving at night.

Abstain from casual sex or practice safe sex with condoms to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Check and consume safe water and food. Carry a supply of medicines for self-treatment of diarrhoea.

Excessive exposure to the sun should be minimised by using sunscreen. The sun can be more intense over water, snow and at high altitudes.

Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies. Seek help if bitten.

If you develop a fever during or after your trip, seek medical attention immediately.

Have a safe trip!