



## Know before you go because international travel takes planning and preparation.

Food, water, weather, health, safety, and cleaning practices may be different from what you are used to. You could become sick from germs that are not common in Pennsylvania.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [destination alerts](#) can be searched to find out what diseases are common in the country where you plan to travel.

Enroll in the **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** to receive advisories from the United States Department of State and assistance from a United States Embassy in an emergency.

To travel internationally from Pennsylvania, ensure that you have a **passport** that is valid for at least 6 months beyond your planned return date.



### Visit a health care provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before your trip.

Tell them where you’re going so they can let you know if you will need vaccines or specific medications to prevent illness during travel. For example, if you are traveling where malaria is a big risk; your provider may suggest anti-malarial medication to be taken before, during, and after your trip. [Find a Clinic | Travelers' Health | CDC](#).

### Travel vaccines that you may need to visit other countries can include:

- [Yellow fever](#)
- [Hepatitis A and B](#)
- [Rabies](#)
- [Meningococcal](#)
- [Polio](#)
- [Measles](#)
- [Chickenpox](#)
- [Flu \(Influenza\)](#)



Confirm that your health care provider reviews both your regular vaccinations and checks if you need travel vaccines.



If you take prescription medications, pack them carefully and bring extra in case of delays. [When traveling abroad with medicine](#), consider carrying on your prescription medications in case your luggage is lost.

If you have a special medical device, carry a doctor’s note that explains its use and purpose.

Check with your destination’s [embassy](#) and the embassies of countries that you have layovers in to make sure your medicines are permitted.



### Prioritize your safety and be aware of your surroundings.

Carry a paper copy of your official immunization records with you when you travel internationally. [Request Immunization Records | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)

Keep valuable items in a safe or a secure hiding spot. Carry copies of your passport and other important documents with you.

Do not walk alone or visit isolated and unfamiliar areas by yourself.

Research and follow local laws and practices. Be wary of scams and pickpockets.



# Health Tips for Traveling Outside of the Continental United States



**Keep a travel journal** to record your journey and what you ate and drank. Reviewing the journal can be a helpful way to remember your trip, and it will serve as a resource for your doctor if you feel sick when you get home.



**Fight the bite.** Diseases like malaria are common diseases spread by biting bugs in other countries. [Protect yourself](#) by using EPA-registered insect repellent with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus. Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and pants, staying in air-conditioned buildings, rooms that have screens for windows and doors, and/or using insect netting when sleeping in areas with mosquitoes.



**Wear sunscreen** (SPF 30 or greater) and reapply regularly throughout the day to protect yourself from the sun. This is especially important if you are taking medications that can make your skin more sensitive to the sun.



**Wash your hands with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds** before eating or touching your face. If clean water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol, especially when spending time near water, animals, and environmental concerns.



**Carefully choose what you eat and drink.** Reduce your risk of diarrhea, food poisoning, and other illnesses by choosing to eat fully cooked, hot foods and avoiding unpasteurized milk or dairy. In areas with unsafe tap water, use bottled or boiled water for drinking and brushing your teeth.



**Swim safely.** Check for warnings before swimming in freshwater streams, canals, and lakes. You may come in contact with animals, jellyfish, red tide, parasites, and germs that live in untreated water. Avoid swimming while sick or with open wounds.



**Reduce your risk of getting in an accident.** Stay safe by wearing a seatbelt, not texting and driving, and not riding in overcrowded vehicles.



## After your trip, remember to finish ALL medications you were prescribed.

Your health care provider may have prescribed medications, like anti-malarial pills, to help your body fight a sickness in case you were exposed to a disease.



## Contact your health care provider if you feel sick after your travels.

Let them know where and when you traveled, your activities, and what you ate and drank.



## After traveling, look for symptoms.

Call a health care provider if you begin to feel sick.

Symptoms can start weeks or months after traveling.

### Common symptoms are:

- Fever
- Chills
- Vomiting/nausea
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- Fatigue
- Other flu-like symptoms

**Note:** This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your health care provider for specific clinical guidance while traveling.

Updated: January 2026