

## TRAVEL TIPS

Education and planning are the key to a successful and healthy trip.

*Travelling can bring much joy and satisfaction to our lives. However, good planning is very important to ensure all aspects of the trip run smoothly.*

*Part of this preparation is to develop an awareness of the differences in healthcare services in the country you are visiting and to be aware of what precautions to take before travelling there. It's important to have the answers to questions like: What happens if I run out of medication while travelling? Can I buy my medications over the counter or do I have to see a doctor? What immunization shots do I need before travelling? How long before I go should I get the vaccines to allow them to reach maximum potency for my trip? Any health dangers while I'm at my destination (water, food)?*

### Immunization

Hepatitis A and B infections can be a concern in many developing and some developed countries. Hepatitis A can result from consuming contaminated food or water. There is a hepatitis A vaccine available that is very effective. It's good insurance to have! Hepatitis A vaccine takes about one month for full protection to occur. One booster dose 6-12 months later is advised. So plan well in advance.

Be aware of the water you drink and the food you eat. Depending on the type of accommodations you choose, there may be a filtered water supply in the hotel or resort. Get assurance that this is so and check the ice cubes as well to ensure they are safe. Bottled water is often supplied in hotel rooms. Use it to brush your teeth if you are unsure of the water.

Hepatitis B can be contracted through contact with blood and bodily fluids of an infected person, unprotected sex and sharing needles and syringes with infected persons. Hepatitis B is a very serious illness and can develop into cirrhosis and/or cancer of the liver. There is a vaccine available that combines both Hepatitis A & B treatments in one shot. The first dose is administered then a second dose one month later followed by a third dose six months after the first dose. Again, planning ahead is important.

Depending on your destination, other vaccinations may be needed. Check with Health Canada's website, a local travel clinic or your Medicine Centre pharmacist for more information.

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