

Travel Healthy with Dr. Locke

Whether you are traveling for business or pleasure, it is imperative that you arrive and remain in good health throughout the duration of your trip. Healthnetwork's Medical Director, Susan Locke, M.D., provides some tips for staying at your peak, no matter your destination.

Traveling a long distance? Jet lag is an inevitable physiological consequence exacerbated by difficulty sleeping. Although jet lag usually resolves itself, a variety of interventions may ease the process. Try shifting daily activities prior to departure to correspond to the time zone of your travel destination. Also, stay well hydrated, avoid alcohol and pursue activities in sunlight upon arrival. Several studies in humans have concluded that in about 50% of subjects, melatonin can significantly improve jet lag by reducing the number of days to establish a normal sleep pattern, reducing sleep latency (amount of time to fall asleep) and decreasing daytime fatigue. The dose for jet lag is 5 mg taken orally at bedtime for 1 week beginning 3 days before the flight. Additionally, your physician can prescribe a short-acting sleeping medication, such as Lunesta or Ambien. Potential side effects may include a mild amnesic syndrome (i.e. you might not remember any details of your flight) and some mild "hangover" effect. Other sleep-aid options include over-the-counter medications, such as Benadryl or Tylenol PM.

Travel Health Kit:

Prescription medications:

- Pack in carry-on luggage in original pill bottles
- Pack copies of all prescriptions
- Controlled substance and injectable medication: pack a letter (on letterhead stationery) from the prescribing physician
- Check with the American Embassy in the country you are visiting to confirm if your medications will be allowed into that country (optional)

Over-the-counter medications:

- Antidiarrheal medicine – most commonly Pepto-Bismol or Imodium (loperamide)
- Medicine for fever or pain (Ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- Antihistamine
- Decongestant
- Anti-motion sickness (i.e. Antivert)
- Antacid
- Antifungal and antibacterial ointment or cream
- 1% hydrocortisone cream

Special prescriptions:

- Consider obtaining prescription for an antibiotic, such as Cipro, for cases of severe diarrhea
- Depending on travel destination, anti-malarial medications

Other useful items:

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent (especially important if traveling to malaria-endemic country)
- Basic first-aid items: Band-Aids, gauze, ace bandage, tweezers, small scissors, antiseptic
- Copy of your health insurance card

Vaccinations:

Routine immunization update:

- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Tetanus-diphtheria
- Influenza
- Pneumococcus

Travel immunizations:

- Hepatitis A – hepatitis A is now part of routine childhood immunization in the US. It is recommended for all unvaccinated travelers going anywhere other than Australia, Canada, western Europe, Japan or New Zealand
- Typhoid – recommended for travelers to East, Southeast, South Asia and other developing countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Africa
- Malaria prophylaxis – if traveling to countries with a risk of malaria
- Other vaccinations based on geographic area of travel: hepatitis B, yellow fever, Japanese B encephalitis, cholera



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Follow Dr. Locke on our website. As she receives questions from our members, her research library continues to grow. Find her link on our home page:

www.healthnetworkfoundation.org.

Have a health question you want to ask Dr. Locke? Send an email to **help@healthnetworkfoundation.org**. All inquiries are kept private and confidential.

If you have questions about Healthnetwork or you would like a referral to one of our centers of excellence, please call our office: 866-968-2467 or 440-893-0830.