

# Pre-Travel Checklist for Short-Term International Travel

## What to know before you go

Guarding your health and safety away from home is important, so we've put together a list of things to do to help minimize the risks.

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## Research and learn about your destination

- Be aware of the risks associated with your host country. [Consult the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisories](#)
- [Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) to find out the recommended vaccines you need to protect yourself from certain communicable diseases. Remember that some vaccines require time to take effect or need multiple injections over a few months
- Learn about the local healthcare system and find local medical resources, such as local doctors and hospitals. [Locate the country's U.S. embassy](#). Find your destination and click on the location of the U.S. Embassy nearest you. Next, navigate to "U.S. Citizen Services" (it may be located in the "Menu" section or directly on the landing page).
- Find out about the country's possible safety risks. Search online using questions like:
  - Can I drink the water in [country]?
  - Common scams in [city]?
  - Safety tips for [demographics] in [city] / [country]?
- Learn about cultural norms. Search online using topics like:
  - What not to do in [city/country]
  - Things you should know before visiting [city/country]
  - Culture in [country]
- Certain populations, such as women, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and people of color may want to consider looking into specific recommendations for travel-friendly destinations by reviewing the following sites:
  - Global Peace Index – [www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/](http://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/), which measures the peacefulness of different countries based on a variety of factors
  - LGBTQ+ Equaldex – [www.equaldex.com/equality-index](http://www.equaldex.com/equality-index), which measures the current status of LGBT rights, laws and freedoms as well as public attitudes towards LGBT people

## Visit your primary care physician and dentist to obtain medical history and records

- Confirm whether your standard vaccines (i.e., diphtheria/tetanus) are up to date
- Bring copies of your medical records detailing medical history, current medical conditions and treatment plans
- Consider storing your personal medical history in an electronic medical record

## Prepare for the unexpected

- Take photos of important documents in case you can't access them due to spotty internet connectivity
- Bring an extensive first aid kit that includes: bandages, splints, tweezers, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, analgesics, decongestants, anti-diarrheals, antacids, contact lens solution, sunscreen, bug repellent, contraceptives
- Bring extra prescription glasses and contacts along with prescription information

## Mind your medications

- Check that your medications are legal in your destination country by contacting the appropriate embassy or consulate
- Pack prescription medication in your carry-on luggage
- In case you need to refill, bring a copy of the prescription with you
- Learn the generic names of your medication. Translate the name of your medications in the local language, as the brand names may differ by country
- Carry at least 3-5 days of extra medication
- If you're on a medication regimen, consult your doctor about how international time zones could affect dosing
- If you require injections (i.e., allergy, insulin), get a letter from your doctor describing the shot's components and administration instructions
- If you have severe allergies, bring injectable epinephrine for unexpected allergic reactions
- Leave all medications in their original bottles and include a physician's letter of explanation in your medical records

## Have a game plan for emergencies and immediate health needs

- Have the local emergency telephone numbers for ambulance, fire, and poison control handy
- Know where to find local pharmacies
- Share your itinerary with an emergency contact at home

## Evaluate your health insurance benefits

### Does your plan...

- Provide emergency evacuation and international medical assistance services?
- Cover the cost of emergency evacuation?
- Arrange direct payment to overseas hospitals that may otherwise require payment up front?
- Cover pre-existing conditions if you need care outside the U.S.?
- Cover prescription drugs purchased abroad?
- Provide 24/7/365 support for customer service, medical assistance and claims?
- Have convenient digital tools that can help you find providers, translate medical terms, find medicine equivalents, get security alerts and more?

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BLPL79500-MEM-6/23