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Plan for smart, safe travel

Before you go

If you're planning an overseas trip, vaccines may be a good idea. But think ahead. Some vaccines should be given a month or more before you plan to leave.

Check with your doctor. Or contact a travel health clinic. Common travel vaccines include:

- Hepatitis
- Diphtheria, tetanus and polio
- Measles
- Yellow fever
- Rabies
- Cholera

Many plans don't cover vaccines for travel. Check your plan documents before you get one.

On your way

Flying across several time zones can give you jet lag.

To help avoid this groggy feeling, choose a daytime flight. And it's helpful to arrive at your destination in the afternoon or evening. During your flight, you should avoid:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Heavy foods

Be sure to drink plenty of water while you are in the air. And walk up and down the aisle every couple of hours. If you suffer from motion sickness, ask your doctor about remedies that can keep you feeling better.

After you arrive

The most common complaint among world travelers is diarrhea. This is generally caused by contaminated food or water.

You can help prevent the problem by drinking only bottled water or soft drinks. You should also stay away from raw shellfish or raw vegetables. And avoid food from street vendors.

You might also ask your doctor about medicines you can take with you.

Safe travel on the ground

In some parts of the world, road accidents are a major concern. Follow these tips whenever possible:

- Travel only in taxis equipped with seat belts (and use them).
- Place all young children in child car seats.
- Do not rent or ride on motorcycles or scooters.
- Don't drive at night, especially between cities.
- Never drink and drive.
- Ask your hotel staff about using public transportation.

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