

Buncombe County - Travel Vaccines

Traveling Out of the Country? Protect Yourself!

Every year, more and more Americans are traveling to other parts of the world - for vacation, business, and to visit friends and family. Whatever your reason for taking a trip, it is important to be proactive, prepared, and protected when it comes to your health. Here are some tips for a healthy trip:

Make a Foreign Travel Appointment

Before you travel, it is important that you make a foreign travel appointment to discuss the diseases you may encounter and any vaccines you might need. This appointment should be made 4-6 weeks before you leave. Check with your local health department's immunization clinic to see if this service is provided. You can schedule an appointment with Buncombe County Health Center's Immunization Clinic by calling 250-5096. Most vaccines take time to become effective in your body and some vaccines must be given in a series over a period of days or sometimes weeks.

If it is less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still make an appointment. You might still benefit from shots or medications and other information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

Some of the diseases you may encounter while traveling are:

- Malaria
- Typhoid
- Yellow fever
- Polio
- Meningitis
- Hepatitis A
- Japanese encephalitis

These are only a few but they are ALL preventable with the correct vaccines! There are some diseases for which vaccines are not available, such as Dengue Fever, but precautions can prevent you from getting it.

Pack a Travel Health Kit

Before leaving home prepare a travel health kit, since you may not be able to find some items where you are going. You may want to include things like medications in their original containers, a basic first aid kit, insect repellent and sunscreen SPF 15 or greater, anti-bacterial handwipes or alcohol based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. A card with information for an emergency contact and family physician in the United States.

Check Your Insurance Coverage

You will be responsible for medical bills while traveling abroad, so check to see if your insurance provides coverage. If not, you may want to consider buying a travel insurance policy before traveling.

Register with the U.S. State Department

It is important to register with the United States State Department travel registration website so the US Embassy or Consulate can contact you in an emergency.

Make Copies of Your Passport

Make extra copies of your passport and travel documents and leave them with a family member or friend. Also leave details of your travel plans and how to contact you.

Precautions to Take While Traveling

- Use an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus/PMED. Apply a product containing permethrin or other insect repellents to clothing, shoes, tents, mosquito nets, and other gear for greater protection. Permethrin should not be used directly on skin.
- Wear sunscreen of SPF 15 or greater.
- To prevent animal bites and rabies, avoid touching or petting animals, especially dogs and wildlife. Lower your risk of avian influenza by avoiding poultry markets and farms.
- Swim only in chlorinated water.
- To prevent infections such as HIV, hepatitis B and C, avoid receiving tattoos, body piercings, or injections.
- While visiting a developing area, eat fully cooked food that is served hot, or fruits and vegetables you can wash and peel yourself.

When You Come Home

After you return home, it is important to call your doctor if you feel sick. Remember to mention that you have recently traveled.

If you have visited a malaria-risk area:

- It is very important that you continue taking your anti-malarial drugs as prescribed, after leaving the risk area.
- Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. If you become ill with a fever or flu-like illness either while traveling in a malaria-risk area or after you return home (for up to 1 year), you should seek immediate medical attention and should tell the physician your travel history.

If you have visited an area where tuberculosis is common, make sure that you get a TB skin test 2 months after returning to make sure that you were not exposed to the disease.

For More Information About Traveler's Health

Please visit the CDC's website. You may also call the Buncombe County Health Center's Immunization Clinic at 250-5096 for an appointment.