



WHOLE HEALTH

Health • Well-Being • Fitness

Don't Let the Travel Bug Give You the Travel Bug

The Irish blessing reads:
May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
The sun shine warm upon your face
The rains fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

We might add a line, "and make sure to get vaccinated before you meet that road!"

Travel precautions can be divided into those that are vaccine preventable, those that require prophylactic medication and those that require specific avoidant precautions. It is important first to know your travel itinerary and expected activities. Travel within a country may require very different preventive measures in an urban versus a rural or remote region. Specific measures to prevent altitude sickness might be considered if the trip includes trekking in a mountainous area.

Vaccine Preventable

It is first important to ensure that routine vaccines are up to date. Many illnesses that we are vaccinated for in Canada are much more prevalent in other countries. Yellow fever vaccine is mandatory for entry into certain countries. Travel to the Haj in Mecca requires certification of a particular meningitis vaccine. For the most part though, vaccines are recommended based on destination and the prevalence of certain diseases. Not all vaccines need to be injected. Typhoid vaccine is available in an oral vaccine as is the newer traveller's diarrhea vaccine, Dukoral. If you have ever suffered Delhi belly or Montezuma's revenge,

it is worthwhile to consider this. Hepatitis A and B vaccines should also be considered for many tropical and subtropical areas.

Prophylactic Medication

Malaria prophylaxis is recommended in many areas. The prevention needs to be started before travel and continued after return.

Avoidant Precautions

The use of boiled or bottled water is the key to preventing many water borne diseases that cannot be prevented by vaccines. Sunscreen and general skin precautions are wise in climates closer to the equator. Rabies is more common in stray animals in many parts of the world compared to North America.

There are travel clinics available in each region. The following are travel clinics in London:

www.ontariotravelclinic.com 50 King Street, Dr. Colby

www.londontravelclinic.com 520 Sarnia Road, Dr. Ole Hammerburg

For destination-specific information, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an excellent clickable map that opens to exhaustive country specific recommendations at www.cdc.gov.

Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men. She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than twenty three years on the job!



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