



Trip Resources: Vaccinations/Health

Whenever we travel to another country, the subject of vaccinations comes up. Getting sick during a trip can certainly ruin it, and getting sick later, because you went on a trip, will taint the whole experience.

Fortunately, there are completely reasonable steps we can all take to greatly reduce the chances of either one happening. These include making sure your vaccinations are up to date, preparing for local health challenges, and taking basic precautionary measures during the trip. Here's a prime to get you started.

Pre-Trip Vaccinations

Some countries require you to be up-to-date on certain vaccinations, and some of the places Embark travels to, especially to developing countries and rural areas, may have higher health risks. For both of these reasons, it is imperative to make sure you are up to date on all recommended vaccinations before traveling abroad.

The simplest and best place to start is the Centers for Disease Control and their [Traveler's Health web page](#). Here, you can enter basic information like who you are and where you're going, and they will provide you with the latest information and suggestions. Generally, wherever you are going, they will suggest you be caught up on routine vaccinations like Hepatitis A and B, rabies, typhoid, measles, flu, etc. The CDC has an excellent chart and even an online quiz to walk you through this on your website.

CDC also has a page of [Travel Health Notices](#) with country-specific information from all over the world.

Of course, another place to start is with your doctor or a travel health clinic. Be sure and tell them where and when you're traveling, for how long, what sorts of activities you'll be engaging in, the state of your health, your vaccination history, and if you are pregnant.

You should see your doctor or a clinic at least three months before leaving the country, to leave time in case you need to complete a vaccination series. To see if there is a travel clinic near you, consult the International Society of Travel Medicine's [Online Clinic Directory](#).

During the Trip

The primary health concerns during a trip have to do with what you eat and drink, what you touch, and which bugs or animals you come into contact with. Most of these boil down to common-sense suggestions, but it is helpful to review them.



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Bugs can carry a number of diseases, so consider wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts when you can, and also using bug repellent, particularly if mosquitoes are an issue where you are going. The Environmental Protection Agency suggest using repellents with at least 20% DEET for protection against mosquitoes, ticks and other bugs. For more information, see the [EPA website](#).

You might also consider using clothing that has been treated with an insecticide called permethrin. This substance is not to be applied to skin, but when included in clothing it can offer another layer of convenient protection.

Enjoying local foods and beverages will, of course, be a big part of your cultural adventure; but it is important to take basic steps to make sure this doesn't pose a challenge to your health. You absolutely don't want diarrhea or some other stomach ailment during your trip!

Begin with washing your hands often with soap and water, and/or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. You should make sure, when possible, that the food you are eating is fully cooked and served hot, or comes from a sealed package. Eggs should be hard-cooked, fruits and vegetables washed in safe water or peeled yourself, and dairy products should all be pasteurized. Avoid foods at room temperatures, street food, undercooked products and wild game whenever possible.

Drinking sodas and other drinks from sealed bottles, or water that has been treated, is fine, as is drinking coffee or tea made with boiled water. Avoid tap or well water, fountain drinks, and unpasteurized milk.

And finally, there's the issue of animals. Whether it's a local pet or a wild animal habituated to humans, the best rule is to not touch them at all, no matter how cute and friendly. With dogs and cats, the main risk is rabies; if you are bitten or scratched, immediately wash the wound with soap and water, alert your guide, and try to see a doctor as soon as possible.

If you are going to an area where monkeys are common, they pose a particular risk. This is because they can be somewhat aggressive if they detect food on your person, and even feeding a monkey can potentially bring you into contact with serious infections.

In all cases, if you are traveling with Embark, you will be in the company of expert local guides who will be aware of all these risks and how to both mitigate them and deal with



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them if exposed. They will also have the medical history you provide to Embark, so it is critical that this history be thorough and accurate.

Taking basic precautions before and during the trip, and communicating clearly with Embark and your trip leader, will go a long way to making sure you have the kind of adventure you dream of: the kind that doesn't leave you injured, sick, or headed home early.