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7 Ways to Avoid Getting Sick Before (and During) Your Next Vacation



BY JUDY KOUTSKY 
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What's worse than losing your [luggage](#)? Getting sick just before (or during) your long-awaited vacation. Follow these steps to ensure no one has to hang out in the hotel room on your next family trip.

1. Get necessary vaccinations prior to travel.

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Before you travel anywhere out of the country, make sure you don't need any special vaccinations. "Visit the [CDC's website](#) regularly to check their latest travel health notices," suggests Beth O'Donnell, GM of [Thomson Family Adventures](#), a tour operator in the U.S. that exclusively programs family travel. Travel notices inform travelers and clinicians about current health issues related to specific international destinations. Notices are categorized into three levels designed to help travelers make smart decisions about where to avoid travel. Even being up-to-date on regular vaccines—such as the flu vaccine—can make the difference between getting sick—or not—on your trip.

2. Be mindful of what you eat and drink.

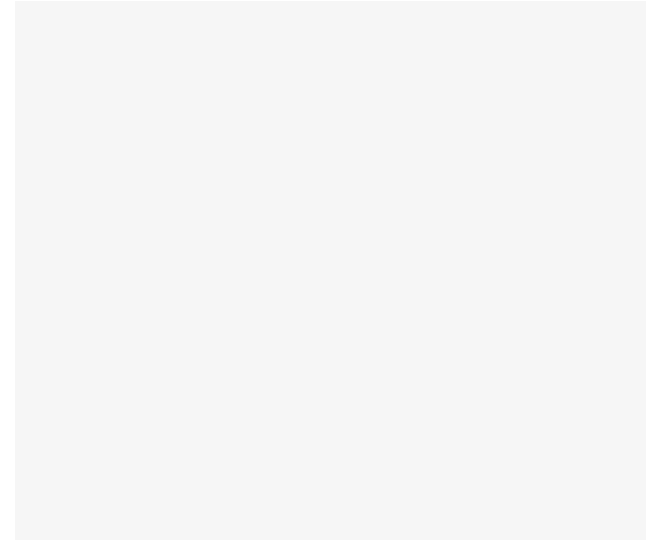
It's important to maintain a well-balanced diet at all times, but especially before (and during) your trip. This will help everyone avoid unexpected headaches, tummy aches, and the like. And if traveling out the country and trying new food, "it's important to do some research before you head out on your trip to find out if there are any viruses, bacterial infection or parasites that may be in food and water," says O'Donnell. Be sure to only eat food that is completely cooked through and served hot, and eat [fruits](#) and [vegetables](#) that you have washed and peeled yourself. Eat and drink dairy products that have been pasteurized and only drink [beverages](#) that have been bottled or sealed.

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3. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.



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Drinking [water](#) helps you rid your body of toxins, and is a good way to prevent sickness when traveling—especially if you’re flying, as long (and even short) flights can dehydrate you. The same rule applies when you arrive at your destination. “The primary reason that travelers get sick from drinking water overseas is because of the local bacteria that your body is not used to,” says O’Donnell. It’s not that other countries have “bad” water; it’s just that our bodies might react differently to it. “Drink only from sealed bottles or cans, which have been sufficiently filtered, and keep one by the sink for brushing your teeth.

Investing in a [reusable water bottle](#) with a built-in filter is a good green alternative and travelers can go the extra mile by buying a [SteriPEN](#), an ultraviolet [water purifier](#) that works on almost every kind of water in about two minutes. Another option is the [LifeSaver Liberty bottle](#), a [water filter](#) bottle and inline pump filter combined, making it a versatile and convenient option on the go. Also note that it’s important to avoid dehydration before and during travel. Even if you’re not feeling thirsty, keep pumping those fluids.

4. Boost your immunity.

“Every traveler should have [nasal mists](#) and [vitamin C](#) tablets in their [carry-on](#),” says O’Donnell. Even before you cross over to your destination, sitting in an airplane for extended periods of time can be a breeding ground for [airborne](#) illnesses. “The cabin air is dry and microorganisms are free to circulate, so keeping nasal passages moist with [nasal spray](#) will enhance the body’s own germ-flushing activity.” Also pack [supplements](#). “To prevent getting sick while traveling, my all-time favorite supplement combination is: [Vitamin D](#), [chlorella](#),

[ginseng](#), [turmeric](#), [elderberry](#) and [omega-3](#),” says says Rebecca Park, a registered nurse from New York City and the creator of [RemediesForMe.com](#).

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5. Wash your hands—often.

“Wash your hands or use [hand sanitizer](#) whenever you touch public property (door handles, railings, bill pay touch pads, public bathroom faucets and doors), especially before you eat and after shaking hands,” says [Tsippora Shainhouse](#), MD, FAAD, a board-certified dermatologist and pediatrician in Los Angeles. Also wash your hands as often as possible at home, ahead of your trip, to avoid spreading germs.

6. Get plenty of sleep.

While you might want to pack everything under the sun into your vacation, make sure you leave enough time for plenty of sleep. Whether that’s getting enough sleep before the trip itself or just planning your days well, it’s important to feel well-rested. Sleep is important for protecting the immune system and generally ensuring that you function at your optimum,” says Caleb Backe, a Health & Wellness Expert for [Maple Holistics](#), a company dedicated to cruelty-free, natural, and sustainable personal care products. [White noise machines](#) or [apps](#), [blackout curtains](#), [eye masks](#), [lavender essential oil](#), and [melatonin](#) are all fantastic [sleep aids](#), wherever you are.

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7. Sanitize your surroundings.

“Wipe down airplane armrests and tables with [Lysol](#) or [Clorox wipes](#) when you get on the plane. Also wipe down telephone receivers and TV remotes in your hotel,” says Shainhouse. And of course, “keep away from visibly sick people—those who are coughing and sneezing.”

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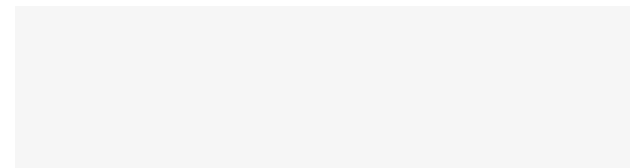
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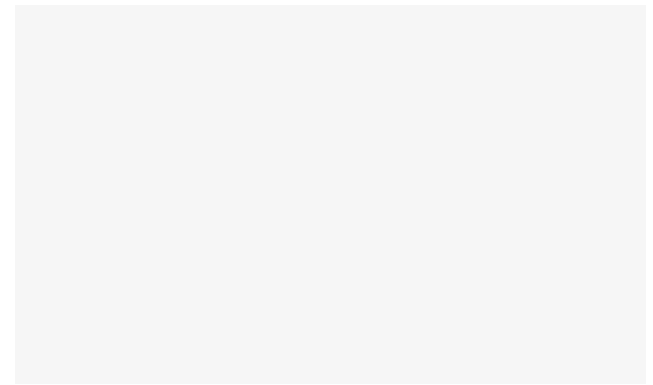
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