



# TRAVEL SAVVY

## Tips for Traveling Safely & Avoiding Illnesses

### ENROLL in STEP

U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) [step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov)

- Free Service
- Receive Security and Emergency Alerts
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

### ROAD SAFETY

Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 KILLER of US citizens traveling abroad



- Ride only in marked taxis you call for.
- Know local traffic laws and what side of the road to drive on.
- Expect cars to share road with pedestrians, bikes, rickshaws, scooters, & animals.
- Don't ride motorcycles/scooters and if you must, wear a helmet.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Avoid riding in a car in a developing country at night.

### BUG BITES - Protect yourself!

Wearing insect repellent with **30-35% DEET** or **20% picaridin** protects against mosquito and tick bites.

**When wearing both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply sunscreen 1st, let it dry, then apply insect repellent.**



### Other ways to prevent bug bites:

- As much as possible, wear long pants (tucked into socks) and long sleeves (shirt tucked in).
- Use permethrin-treated gear (tents, sleeping bags) and clothing.
- Sleep in air-conditioned places.
- Sleep under a bed net if sleeping area is exposed to the outdoors.
- Mosquitoes: dengue, chikungunya, malaria, Zika, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis
- Ticks: African tick-bite fever, Mediterranean spotted fever, tickborne encephalitis
- Other: scrub typhus (chiggers), plague (fleas), sleeping sickness (tsetse fly)

### FOOD & BEVERAGES

Guaranteeing the safety of food and beverages is difficult if not impossible when traveling, especially in developing countries. Without strict public health standards, bacteria or parasites in food or water may go undetected and cause illness such as traveler's diarrhea.



*TIPS: (refer to your pre-travel handouts, if applicable)*

- Wash hands/sanitize often.
- Avoid ice unless you know it is purified.
- Usually safe: hot food, dry food, sealed bottled beverages, hot drinks, alcohol.
- Risky choices: raw food, street food, bush meat, tap water, ice, fountain drinks, freshly squeezed juices, unpasteurized food and drink products.

### SAFE WATER FUN

Water can contain bacteria and parasites.

- Don't participate in water activities if you have broken skin, cuts, or open wounds.
  - Don't swallow water.
- Drowning accounts for 13% of US travelers' deaths abroad.
- Don't swim alone.
  - Use proper safety equipment.
  - Be aware of your surroundings.
  - DO NOT use alcohol when swimming, diving, or boating.



### SEXUAL HEALTH

Don't bring back unwanted souvenirs!



Rules at home are the same as rules abroad... **PRACTICE SAFE SEX**

- Use condoms consistently
- It only takes one risky encounter to negatively affect your physical and mental health.

### MENTAL HEALTH

Traveling can be stressful.



- Talk with friends, family, and your doctor before you go to reduce stress.
- Travel health insurance usually excludes mental health coverage. Research policies and have a plan. Consider evacuation ins.
- If you are on medication, bring enough for your trip along with a letter from your provider stating your condition, medication and dose.
- Plan ahead – who you can call when you need help