

Traveler's Health Kit

When traveling abroad, having a traveler's health kit can be a useful item to include in your luggage for potential health issues that can arrive while traveling. Below are some medical items that could be included in a traveler's health kit.

Medications

- Personal prescription medications in their original containers (copies of all prescriptions should be carried, including the generic names for medications, and a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injectable medications)
- Antimalarial medications, if applicable
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medication (e.g., bismuth subsalicylate, loperamide)
- Antibiotic for self-treatment of moderate to severe diarrhea
- Antihistamine
- Decongestant, alone or in combination with antihistamine
- Anti-motion sickness medication
- Acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, or other medication for pain or fever
- Mild laxative
- Cough suppressant/expectorant
- Throat lozenges
- Antacid
- Antifungal and antibacterial ointments or creams
- 1% hydrocortisone cream
- Epinephrine auto-injector (e.g., EpiPen), if history of severe allergic reaction. Also available in smaller-dose package for children.

Other Important Items

- Insect repellent containing DEET (up to 50%)
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater that is waterproof)
- Aloe gel for sunburns
- Digital thermometer
- Oral rehydration solution packets
- Basic first-aid items (adhesive bandages, gauze, ace wrap, antiseptic, tweezers, scissors, cotton-tipped applicators)
- Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- Moleskin for blisters
- Lubricating eye drops
- First aid quick reference card

Other items that may be useful in certain circumstances

- Mild sedative (e.g., zolpidem) or other sleep aid
- Anti-anxiety medication
- High-altitude preventive medication
- Water purification tablets

- Commercial suture/syringe kits (to be used by local health-care provider. These items will also require a letter from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery.)
- Latex condoms
- Address and phone numbers of area hospitals or clinics

Commercial medical kits are available for a wide range of circumstances, from basic first aid to advanced emergency life support. Many outdoor sporting goods stores sell their own basic first aid kits. For more adventurous travelers, a number of companies produce advanced medical kits and will even customize kits based on specific travel needs. In addition, specialty kits are available for managing diabetes, dealing with dental emergencies, and handling aquatic environments. If travelers choose to purchase a health kit rather than assemble their own, they should be certain to review the contents of the kit carefully to ensure that it has everything needed; additional items may be necessary.

Below is a list of websites supplying a wide range of medical kits. There are many suppliers, and this list is not meant to be all inclusive.

- [Adventure Medical Kits](http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com) – www.adventuremedicalkits.com
- [Chinook Medical Gear](http://www.chinookmed.com) – www.chinookmed.com
- [Harris International Health Care](http://www.safetravel.com) – www.safetravel.com
- [Travel Medicine, Inc.](http://www.travmed.com) – www.travmed.com
- [Wilderness Medicine Outfitters](http://www.wildernessmedicine.com) – www.wildernessmedicine.com

A final reminder: a health kit is useful only if it is available. It should be carried with the traveler at all times, e.g., in carry-on baggage when allowable, and on excursions. All medications, especially prescription medications, should be stored in carry-on baggage, in their original containers with clear labels. With heightened airline security, sharp objects and some liquids and gels will have to remain in checked luggage.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information in this handout is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional. It is advised that all people of any age consult a healthcare professional prior to traveling outside the U.S.A.