

FOR THE CHILDREN  
INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION MEDICAL SERVICES

A Service of Cabarrus Pediatric Clinic

*Helping orphans worldwide unite with forever families by preparing parents for the joys and struggles of international adoption.*

## Travel Advice

In general, the biggest real risks in international travel are not exotic diseases, airline accidents, or terrorism but much more ordinary things like:

1. **Automobile accidents** – Auto accidents are the leading cause of serious injury and death during international travel. Wear your seatbelt (if the car has one!) even if the locals don't! If you feel your driver is being unsafe, say something or get another driver. If you are able to take a child car seat that's great but it's extremely inconvenient to tote through the whole trip and the car may not even have seatbelts. Consider obtaining medical evacuation insurance (usually \$25-\$50 per person for a 2-4 week trip). This covers your air evacuation back to the U.S. in case of an extreme emergency.
2. **Traveler's diarrhea** – If you burn into your brain: TAP WATER IN LESS-DEVELOPED FOREIGN COUNTRIES = POISON! you will do fine! This is an exaggeration but gets the point across. Drink only **factory-sealed bottled water**. Be aware that counterfeit bottled water (tap water put in recycled water bottles) is big business in some countries (make sure the lid is sealed tight)! Another option which is great for ten o'clock at night when you've just run out of water and the shops are closed: **treat tap water with "Potable Water" iodine tablets**. If you do this take a collapsible container that is the correct size for measuring out water for treatment and get the neutralizing tablets that come with some Potable Water kits (this removes the brown iodine color as well as most of the iodine taste). Mixing this water with Gatorade or Tang powder also covers the iodine flavor. Look for these items at Kmart or Walmart in the camping section or at other camping stores. This water is great for brushing your teeth with so you don't have to buy as much bottled water. Don't use tap water to rinse your toothbrush and don't open your mouth in the shower. A healthy dose of paranoia will increase your odds of having a healthy trip. **Carbonated soft drinks or water** are safe since the carbonation acidifies things enough to kill most bacteria (consider using a straw or at least wipe the can with alcohol swabs). Also, hot beverages are safe as long as they are very hot!

As far as foods go, "Cook it, peel it, or leave it!" Do not eat fresh vegetables (like salad) because it's impossible to clean out all the crevices, plus it was

probably washed with unclean tap water in the kitchen. Do not get drinks with ice – remember the ice was made with tap water! Eat fruit only if you peeled it yourself. Be sure you've washed it well (wiping with alcohol wipes is a good idea too) before you peel it. Do not cut through or peel an unwashed fruit as this will simply drag bacteria from the peel down into the fruit you eat. Lastly, no matter how good the foods sold by local, street-side vendors look, do not eat them!

If you want to be extremely cautious use these guidelines on any flights within foreign countries and for the flight home (airline food is usually prepared in the country the flight originates in, not the U.S.).

3. **Usual illnesses (colds, etc.)** – Not life-threatening but can make your trip less than ideal. Take naps as often as possible. Consider taking vitamins.

### **Checklist of Medications and Supplies to Take**

#### **For your child:**

##### **Prescription medications/creams:**

General antibiotic for ear infections, pneumonia, sinusitis, etc. (e.g. Zithromax)  
Cream for scabies (permethrin)

##### **Over-the-counter medications/creams:**

Cold medication (decongestant + cough; e.g. Sudafed, Dimetapp, or Robitussin)  
Benadryl liquid (anti-histamine)  
Tylenol/Motrin (age appropriate sizes)  
Regular diaper rash ointment (Desitin, Balmex, or A&D)  
Lotrimin cream (for yeast diaper rashes)  
Topical antibiotic for cuts and scrapes (Neosporin)  
Gatorade (powder)  
Nasal saline  
Moisturizing lotion/crème (e.g. Eucerin, Aquaphor, Vaseline Intensive Care, etc.)  
Band-aids/Gauze  
Hydrocortisone 1.0% for various rashes  
Mylicon “gas drops” for infants  
Nix or Rid for head lice

##### **Other:**

Digital thermometer (with K-Y jelly or Vaseline for rectal temps)

#### **For Parents:**

**Travel vaccinations** to consider (discuss with a specialist at a travel clinic – *not all shots are required for everyone*). Start early! Some of these shots require multiple doses spaced apart by months (e.g. Hepatitis B). If you're too late to get a full set prior to travelling at least get started - some protection is better than none. Also be sure to budget for these - they're not cheap.

- Tetanus/Diphtheria booster (unless you've had it <10 yrs ago)
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) booster (if not already up-to-date)
- Hepatitis B (3 given over 6 months)
- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Polio booster (injectable form)
- Chicken Pox (if you've never had the disease)
- Influenza (if in flu season where you're going)
- Yellow fever
- Ask about need for malaria prophylaxis

Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (the U.S. Centers for Disease Control) and look under "Traveler's health" on the left of the page to find out specifics about the region you will be visiting. This is an excellent resource for region-specific vaccines and any recent outbreaks!

**Medications, etc. (for parents):**

- Traveler's diarrhea treatment:
  - Antibiotic (Ask your physician for prescription)
  - Imodium
  - Pepto Bismol
  - Gatorade powder

Potable Water Iodine tablets with collapsible water jug. Check in a camping store or Kmart/Walmart.

Alcohol swabs (for wiping off drinks, fruit prior to peeling, etc..)

Alcohol-based hand washing gel (carry it everywhere and use it frequently!)

Straws (to avoid dirty drinking containers, glasses)

Laxative

Motrin/Tylenol

Consider a sleep aid (Benadryl or Ambien – talk to your physician, there are various opinions on how to deal with jet-lag).

Take extra of any of your own medications stowed in different luggage as well as carry-on.

Take extra glasses/contacts if they are critical.

Sunscreen depending on where you're going.

Mosquito spray (depending on where you're traveling)