



# Travelling with Children

Infants and children under 7 years of age are at higher risk of getting sick from travel to tropical and developing countries. Children have unique needs. Speak with your doctor or travel clinic staff for advice before travelling.

## What to Bring

- Insect repellent in liquid form, not aerosol.
- Oral re-hydration salts (ORS) and water-disinfectant tablets.
- Medication for a fever as recommended by your doctor.
- Comfortable, closed-toe shoes, and loose fitting, cotton clothes and a sun hat if travelling to a destination with a hot climate.
- A waterproof sunscreen with SPF 20 (sun protection factor) or more.
- Your child's car seat. It may be used on board the plane if a seat is available.

## Travel by Air

- Air travel is *not* recommended for premature infants and infants younger than 7 days old.
- While the plane is taking off and landing, breastfeed or bottle-feed infants. Feeding your child gets them to swallow and prevents ear pain.

## Travel Immunizations

Make sure that your child is up to date with their routine immunizations through their regular health care provider. Also visit a travel clinic at least 6 to 8 weeks prior to travel.

Travel vaccines that may be recommended depending on your destination, itinerary, length of stay and child's age include:

- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal
- Travellers' diarrhea and cholera
- Typhoid
- Yellow fever
- Japanese encephalitis
- Rabies
- Immune globulin

If you are travelling to an area with measles, the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine, which is given in Canada at 12 months of age, can be given to infants as young as 6 months of age. Some vaccines should not be given to infants and young children.

Carry a record of your and your child's immunizations during travel. Contact your doctor, travel clinic, or public health nurse, or doctor about the risk of infection while travelling.

## How to Prevent Illness

- Use only bottled, purified, or boiled and cooled water to mix formula and juices.
- Continue to breastfeed. Now is not the time to wean your child.
- Consider canned liquid formula for short trips.
- Do not give medicine to prevent traveller's diarrhea to children.

## ***Malaria***

Malaria is a disease caused by mosquito bites and tiny parasites that get into the bloodstream. The best way to prevent malaria is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. If possible, do not take infants or young children to areas where there is malaria. Malaria prevention is very complicated because the medications available for children are limited, and the effects of the disease are more serious for children than adults. Breast fed babies whose mothers are taking medication to prevent malaria must also be given medication, since little of the mother's medication will be in the breast milk.

If you are taking part in outdoor activities between dusk and dawn, use insect repellent on all exposed skin. The most effective insect repellents contain a product called DEET. In Canada, DEET products are not recommended for use with children younger than 2 years of age. However, when children aged 6 months to 2 years live or travel in an area with malaria, the chances of severe illness is higher than the risks of DEET repellent when applied properly. For more information on DEET, see HealthLink BC File [#96 Insect Repellants and DEET](#).

## ***Traveller's Diarrhea***

Children younger than 2 years of age who have a lot of diarrhea should receive medical care. Take the child to a health care professional right away if you see any signs of dehydration: your child may be very restless or irritable, have less and darker urine than normal, and be hard to wake up. Take the child to a health care professional if he or she has bloody diarrhea, a fever higher than 38.5°C (101.3°F), or persistent vomiting.

Do not give antibiotics or other medications to children to stop diarrhea unless advised by a doctor.

Give your child re-hydration solution or Gastrolyte® by mouth if the child shows signs of mild dehydration, such as feeling thirsty and restless, yet alert.

Give children lots of fluids to drink, and continue breast or formula feeding throughout the illness.

Feed children over 6 months of age thin porridge, rice and soups. As they recover, children can eat their usual foods.

## **For More Information**

For more information, see the following HealthLink BC Files:

[#41f Malaria Prevention](#)

[#41e Traveller's Diarrhea](#)

For more HealthLink BC File topics, visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles/index.stm) or your local public health unit.

Click on [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) or call **8-1-1** for non-emergency health information and services in B.C.

For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance, call 7-1-1 in B.C.

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