



Travel immunizations for adults

If you are going to be travelling, make sure to discuss your travel plans with a public health unit, a travel clinic or your health care provider at least 6 to 8 weeks before you travel. This is important because some vaccines may take several weeks to become fully effective, and others may require more than 1 dose. This is especially important if you live in a rural area where vaccines may not be in supply. There is a charge for most travel vaccines, and in most cases, there is also a doctor's fee.

Bring a record of all vaccines you have received in the past to the travel clinic. Keep a record of the travel vaccines you receive and take this with you on your trip.

Which immunizations do I need to get if I am planning to travel?

The immunizations you need depend on where you are going, how long you are staying and how you will be travelling. Make sure you are up to date with your routine immunizations through your regular health care provider.

The following vaccines are the common immunizations recommended for adult travellers.

Polio vaccine

Polio is a disease caused by infection with a virus. People get it by eating food or drinking water contaminated with feces. You may require a dose of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) if you are going to areas where polio is present, have not been vaccinated before or have not had a one-time booster against polio. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #13 Polio vaccine \(IPV\)](#).

Hepatitis A vaccine

Hepatitis A is a disease caused by infection of the liver with the hepatitis A virus. People get it by eating contaminated food or drinking water. One dose of hepatitis A vaccine can provide good short-term protection. A second dose of vaccine

should be given later for lifetime protection. A combined vaccine against hepatitis A and B is also available. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #33 Hepatitis A vaccine](#).

Typhoid fever vaccine

Typhoid Fever is a serious and life-threatening infection caused by typhoid bacteria. People get it by eating food or drinking water contaminated with feces.

There are 2 types of typhoid vaccine - oral (by mouth) and injection (by needle). The oral vaccine is a series of capsules you take at home. The injection vaccine is only 1 dose at the travel clinic. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #41j Typhoid vaccine](#).

Traveller's diarrhea and cholera vaccine

Traveller's diarrhea and cholera are caused by 2 different types of bacteria. People get these by eating contaminated food or drinking water. Cholera infection can be life-threatening if severe and not treated. This vaccine comes in liquid form. You take it at home as a series of doses by mixing in water. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #41k Traveller's diarrhea and cholera vaccine](#).

Influenza vaccine

Influenza, or the flu, is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus. Influenza spreads easily from person to person through coughing, sneezing, or face-to-face contact. The vaccine is recommended if you plan to travel during the flu season. Flu season usually runs from November to April in the Northern hemisphere, and from April to October in the Southern hemisphere. It runs year-round in tropical regions. Adults usually receive one dose of the vaccine. Sometimes children receive 2 doses. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #12d Inactivated influenza \(flu\) vaccine](#).

Hepatitis B vaccine

Hepatitis B is a disease caused by infection of the liver with the hepatitis B virus. It spreads by unprotected sexual intercourse or needle sharing. In rare instances, it can be spread by infected blood products.

Hepatitis B can cause permanent liver damage. It is also the main cause of liver cancer, which can be fatal. The vaccine is recommended if you plan to stay for 6 months or longer in a country where hepatitis B is common. It is also recommended if you expect to have sexual relations or blood contact with local residents. You will receive this vaccine as a series of 2 or 3 doses. A combined vaccine against hepatitis A and B is available. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #25a Hepatitis B vaccine](#).

Japanese encephalitis vaccine

Japanese encephalitis is a serious and life-threatening infection caused by a virus. It spreads by the bite of infected mosquitoes. The vaccine is sometimes recommended for travellers going to rural areas of some Asian countries. You will receive this vaccine as a series of 2 doses or shots 7 to 28 days apart. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #41h Japanese encephalitis vaccine](#).

Meningococcal infection vaccine

Meningococcal infection is a serious and life-threatening infection caused by meningococcal bacteria. The infection spreads from one person to another by coughing, sneezing or close face-to-face contact. It can also be spread through saliva or spit when people share things like food and drinks.

The vaccine is recommended for travellers who have close contact with local residents in areas where epidemics are common. These areas may change, but commonly include parts of Africa and the Middle East. Vaccination is a requirement for travelling to Mecca (for the annual "Hajj"), at least 10 days prior to entry to Saudi Arabia.

For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #23a Meningococcal C conjugate \(Men-C\) vaccine](#) and [HealthLinkBC File #23b Meningococcal quadrivalent vaccines](#).

Rabies vaccine

Rabies is an infection of the brain caused by a virus that spreads through the bite or scratch of an infected animal. Vaccination is recommended for travellers at risk of exposure to rabies. This includes visitors staying one month or longer in areas with a high risk of rabies. Examples include parts of Latin America, South East Asia, India and Africa. Travelling children are especially at risk due to their tendency to touch or play with wild or stray animals. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #07a Rabies](#).

Yellow fever vaccine

Yellow Fever is a serious and life-threatening infection caused by a virus. It spreads by the bite of infected mosquitoes. It is present in tropical areas of Africa, Central and South America.

The vaccine comes in one dose and must be taken at least 10 days before you travel to a tropical area. At the travel clinic, you will receive a stamped document called the International Certificate of Vaccination Against Yellow Fever. This document is an official record and a legal requirement for entry into some countries. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #41i Yellow fever vaccine](#).

For more information

For a list of travel vaccines that you should consider when travelling to a particular country, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/vaccines>.

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.