

First Aid Kits and Medications

The type of kit taken on a trip depends on personal preference, destination, nature of the trip and your medical knowledge. Remember to take an adequate supply of your regular medicine with the prescription and appropriate malaria tablets if required. The counterfeiting of medicines is prevalent in some countries.

General First Aid Kit

- Sterile plasters, gauze pads, surgical tape (e.g., micropore)
- Antiseptic cream / saline wash / alcohol wipes
- Pain killer and antipyretic e.g., paracetamol or Ibuprofen
- Oral rehydration sachets or tablets

Other essential items

- Sun creams (at least factor 30), insect repellents (DEET 50%)
- Alcohol hand sanitiser
- Consider taking condoms
- Consider Tubigrip® or elasticated bandages for limb injuries
- Consider water purification treatments/ filtration system

Sterile Emergency Medical Kit

Some resource poor countries re-use medical supplies such as syringes and needles increasing the risk of HIV and Hepatitis B & C infection. If you carry a small pack containing sterile syringes, needles, sutures and dressings, it can be used if you require emergency treatment in these circumstances. Airline regulations demand that medical kits are packed in aircraft hold.

Medical kit for travellers who will be remote from medical care

If you are travelling remote from medical care or have certain medical conditions, it may be worth considering taking antibiotics (at the discretion of your medical advisor) and those who will be very remote from medical care should discuss standby malaria treatment where appropriate.

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Kits can be purchased from Well-Travelled Clinics.

Useful medication (prescription not necessary)

- Antihistamine tablets
- Anti-diarrhoeal agent such as loperamide (for adults only)
- Anti-travel sickness medicine
- An antifungal cream.
- Oil of cloves, to treat tooth ache
- Women may also want to take an antifungal pessary/cream for treating vaginal thrush.
- Hydrocortisone cream is helpful for itchy (but not infected) insect bites and rashes.
- Painkillers that include codeine (or any opiate drugs) can cause problems when entering some countries.

Check the entry regulations of the country you are travelling to in advance. An importation license is required by some countries:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-and-travel>

Suggested websites

- <http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/> NaTHNaC website for country specific and general travel health advice.
- www.istm.org - International Society of Travel Medicine, for directory of worldwide travel health clinics.
- www.iamat.org - for a directory of English speaking doctors abroad.
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Travel information:
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Useful reading:

There are many handbooks available to assist you while travelling, e.g.:

Travel Health Pocket Guide (1st edition, 2008) by Ted Lankester

Travellers Health: How to Stay Healthy Abroad (5th edition, 2012) by Richard Dawood.