

## Health Information for Travelers to China

There are risks to traveling abroad but the benefits of the experience far outweigh those risks. The biggest health risk when traveling is an injury or accident. The precautions you practice in the US are also important abroad: wear seat belts, avoid becoming intoxicated, do not use illegal drugs, do not walk alone at night, etc.

The health risks related to illness and disease are also relatively easy to manage by receiving appropriate vaccines, practicing good hygiene - including safe-sex practices, keeping a supply of medications, and avoiding risky behaviors like drinking untreated water or eating street food.

One health risk that can seem ominous for visitors to China is an exposure to tuberculosis bacteria (TB). TB is a treatable disease that is spread by inhaling airborne droplets scattered into the atmosphere by someone with an active infection. It is not spread by touching skin, clothes, objects, etc. Transmission of the disease is much more prevalent when individuals share confined space over a period of time with someone who has active TB disease. Examples are those living or working in institutional care facilities, imprisoned or sharing a home.

Not everyone exposed will become infected with TB since there must be an adequate concentration of the airborne bacteria. In addition, not everyone who becomes infected will develop TB disease – their immune system overcomes the bacteria.

The only way to know your TB status is to have a TB test. This may either be a skin test to check one's immune response or a blood test to identify TB antibodies. However, a positive TB test does not mean a person has TB disease. Those who have received a BCG vaccine will test positive, as will those individuals with a latent TB infection (LTBI). Individuals with LTBI have had a TB infection sometime in their past but are not infectious and do not have symptoms.

If a skin test or blood test is positive a chest X-ray is ordered to diagnose active TB disease. If the X-ray is negative, no further action is required. If the X-ray is positive the individual must be isolated until treatment is sufficient to reduce the possibility of infecting others. The isolation is generally a matter of a week.

## Healthy Travel Packing List

- **Your prescriptions**
- **Personal health items such as spare glasses, contact lenses, diabetic supplies, inhalers, EpiPen, etc.**

### Over-the-counter medicines

- **Antacid**
- **Diarrhea medicine**
- **Antihistamine**
- **Cough drops/Cough suppression/expectorant**
- **Decongestant**
- **Medicine for pain and fever**
- **Mild laxative**

### First-aid kit

- **1% hydrocortisone cream**
- **Antifungal ointments**
- **Antibacterial ointments/Antiseptic wound cleanser**
- **Insect bite treatment - Anti-itch gel or cream**
- **Eye drops**
- **Bandages**
- **Digital thermometer**
- **Scissors and safety pins**
- **Cotton swabs (Q-Tips)**
- **Tweezers**

### Prevention

- **Hand sanitizer or wipes**
- **Insect repellent and Permethrin**
- **Sunscreen, Sunglasses and hat**
- **Earplugs**
- **Latex condoms**

### Documents

- **Health insurance documents**  
Health insurance card (your regular plan and/or supplemental travel health insurance plan) and copies of claim forms
- **Copies of prescriptions**  
Include generic prescription names. Bring prescriptions for medicines, eye glasses/contacts, and medical supplies.
- **Contact Information**  
Street addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of:
  - Family member or close contact remaining in the US
  - Health care provider(s) at home
  - Hospitals or clinics in your destination
  - US embassy or consulate in the destination country or countries