

Travel immunizations for adults

If you are travelling, discuss your travel plans with a public health unit, a travel clinic or your health care provider at least 6 to 8 weeks before your trip. Some vaccines may take several weeks to become effective and others may need more than one dose. This is especially important if you live in a rural area where some vaccines may not be available. There is a fee for most travel vaccines and in most cases, an extra 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. Keep routine immunizations up to date through your health care provider.

The following vaccines are 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 need 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, please visit [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. You should get a second dose of the vaccine 6-36 months later for lifetime protection. A combined vaccine against hepatitis A and B is also available. For more information, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #33 Hepatitis A 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 spread through infected blood products.

Hepatitis B can cause permanent liver damage. It is also the main cause of liver cancer, which can be fatal. Get the vaccine if you plan to stay for 6 months or longer in a country where hepatitis B is common. You should get the vaccine 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, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #25a Hepatitis B 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 one dose given by a health care provider. For more information, please visit [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 by mouth, as a series of doses by mixing in water. For more information, please visit [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 through coughing, sneezing, or

face-to-face contact. You should get the vaccine if you plan to travel during 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. Children 2 to 8 years of age who have never received an influenza vaccine need 2 doses given 4 weeks apart. For more information, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #12d Inactivated influenza \(flu\) 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. You may need the vaccine if you travel to rural areas of some Asian countries. You will receive this vaccine as a series of two doses 7 to 28 days apart. For more information, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #41h Japanese encephalitis vaccine](#).

Meningococcal infection vaccine

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

You should get the vaccine if you have close contact with residents in areas where epidemics are common. Currently, these include but are not limited to parts of Africa and the Middle East. You need to receive a vaccine to travel to Mecca (for the annual "Hajj"), at least 10 days before entering Saudi Arabia.

For more information, please visit [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. It spreads through bites or scratches from an infected animal. You should get the vaccine if you plan to stay one month or longer in areas with a high risk of rabies. Examples include parts of Latin America, Southeast 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, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #07a Rabies](#).

Yellow fever vaccine

Yellow fever is a serious and life-threatening infection caused by a virus. It spreads through bites from infected mosquitoes. It is present in tropical areas of Africa, Central and South America.

The vaccine comes in one dose. You should receive it 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 is an official record and a legal requirement for entry into some countries. For more information, please visit [HealthLinkBC File #41i Yellow fever vaccine](#).

Mpox vaccine

Mpox is a virus that can spread through skin-to-skin contact, respiratory droplets and contact with objects used by a person with mpox. The vaccine for mpox is given as 2 doses, 28 days apart. B.C. offers mpox vaccine to [eligible individuals](#) at risk of exposure, regardless of travel plans.

The Public Health Agency of Canada currently recommends you get an mpox vaccine before travelling if you meet high risk criteria. This includes health care professionals travelling to support mpox response in certain countries. If you are travelling and are unsure if you qualify, reach out to your [local public health unit](#) to discuss your situation. For more information, please visit [HealthLinkBC Mpox](#).

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>
- [Well on Your Way - A Canadian's Guide to Healthy Travel Abroad](#)

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/health-library/healthlinkbc-files 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.