



## Travel Safety

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Whether you're staying close or traveling afar, it is vitally important that parents traveling with young children take the necessary steps to ensure their destination is as safe and secure as it is fun and relaxing. Research your family travel destination thoroughly before you leave. Consider health risks such as drinking water, infectious diseases and safety concerns to avoid unnecessary risks.

Reading the checklist below will remind you of the childproofing items that your children should travel with and the precautions you should take prior to leaving. Whether your vacation destination is a fabulous oceanfront, a cozy cottage by a lake or a campsite in the remote woods, taking the following precautions can prevent potential accidents and other travel mishaps.



## Parent's Checklist 'Before You Leave'

Before you leave for your vacation/holiday/trip please ensure the following:



- Electrical appliances are unplugged
- Gas supply is shut off
- Water taps (or supply) are turned off
- Assign someone to check your mail daily and water your plants
- Notify your newspaper and other publications of your vacation time
- Pack a supply of outlet covers for your holiday destination as a precautionary measure so you're children cannot stick their fingers in the electrical sockets.
- Pack a 'cool' low wattage night light if you're children feel uncomfortable in unfamiliar places
- Make copies of important identification cards, medical cards and credit cards. Experts recommend that you leave a copy at home and have another copy packed separately. If your Identification, medical or credit cards are lost or stolen, having the numbers and Emergency contact information will be very helpful.
- Give a relative or friend your travel itinerary and the name and contact information of your holiday destination in case of an emergency.
- Prepare a travel health kit (please see itemized list in 'Travel Health Kit' below)
- Discuss the use of medications with your Family Physician and children's paediatrician. Bring your child's pediatrician a complete travel itinerary including your destination and planned activities so that he/she can assess which diseases your child may be at risk of contracting and whether additional immunizations are appropriate.
- Get an up-to-date record of your childrens' immunizations. Some countries have immunization entry requirements to protect their own citizens from imported diseases.
- Check with your airline or Canadian Air Transport Security Authority's for restrictions on carrying sharp objects & liquids in your carry-on baggage. [Pack Smart](#)  for more information.
- Always carry proof of your health insurance coverage when travelling. Call your health insurance company to find out what coverage your policy provides in other countries should you need medical assistance.
- If you are uncomfortable or uneasy about your vacation destination your children will perceive your discomfort and become uneasy too. Make a list of the items that are giving you anxiety and research solutions so that you will all have a happy and safe vacation.
- Investigate air safety policies at all departure points and pack your suitcases and hand luggage accordingly. Introduce your children to airport security rules and measures before you leave home. Entrusting a favourite stuffed toy to security personnel or a conveyor belt might be terrifying to a toddler.
- Carry a recent photo of each child and make sure that your children carry identification cards that contain their names, their parents' names, the name of the hotel and the appropriate telephone numbers.

## Contact Card

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Carry the following information in case of a medical emergency:

1. Name, address, and phone number of a family member or friend in Canada
2. Name and phone number of your health care provider in Canada
3. Address and phone number of your accommodations at your destination(s)
4. Address and phone number of hospitals or clinics at your destination(s)
5. Emergency contact phone number from your travel health insurance provider



## Childproof Your Accommodations Upon Arrival

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- ➔ Cover electrical outlets at your holiday destination
- ➔ Scan the rooms for anything dangerous, i.e. sharp objects or a protruding piece of metal.
- ➔ Check the windows and shower doors to make sure they're securely in place.
- ➔ Make sure the lights and locks work properly.
- ➔ Make sure to bring doorknob covers, toilet locks, and other childproof gear that you use in your home. Move glasses, ashtrays, matches, coffeemakers, and travel shampoos out of your child's reach.
- ➔ Baby amenities, powder, diapers, ointment, first-aid creams and other health care medications and products can pose threats to a young child's safety. When unpacking, make sure that these items are stored high and out of your children's reach.
- ➔ If you will be using Child Care Services find out who will be watching your child, where they will be staying, and what activities will be offered for your children. Check out where your child may be eating or playing and make sure everything appears clean and well maintained.
- ➔ If you are planning on visiting a playground, investigate the area for potential dangers, i.e. sharp edges, protrusions, openings that could trap a child's head or body, missing or broken guardrails, warped or rusted components, and loose nuts or bolts.
- ➔ Make sure that play areas are age-appropriate for your children. Children can be injured when playing on equipment that is not suitable for their age or size.
- ➔ Teach your children to not answer the door to your accommodation. Instruct them to get an adult if someone knocks on the door, and to ignore the knocking if no adult is available.



## Holiday Destination - Windows Safety



- Never place portable cribs, playpens, or other low standing furniture near a window at your holiday destination. Curious toddlers want to explore their new surroundings and can accidentally fall through an open window or window screen.

- Mini-blinds and pleated shades made before 2001 have looped pull cords, which are a potential strangulation hazard.

## Keep Camping Safe



- Sometimes camp nights can be really chilly and require heat inside your tent or camper. Use a portable heater equipped with an Oxygen Depletion Sensor (ODS), which automatically shuts down the device before it can produce deadly levels of carbon monoxide (CO).
- Be mindful of makeshift heat sources, i.e. traditional camping heaters, charcoal grills, camping lanterns and gas generators which can cause CO poisoning if left unattended.
- If you don't allow the kids to swim unattended in your backyard don't permit them to do so in the hotel or resort pool. Rules that you have established at home still apply at foreign places. If they wear a lifejacket in your backyard pool, a local swimming pool or lake, they should wear one no matter where the travel destination.



## Torches and Fuels

Decorative, refillable outdoor torches are great to sit by on a warm summer night, but can pose flammability and toxicity hazards to your children:

- Lit torches are an open flame source. Never leave a burning torch or candle unattended.
- Swallowing the liquid fuel can cause severe health effects and even death.
- Teach your children that these products are not toys.
- Keep all products containing liquid fuel out of sight and out of reach when not in use.
- Always read the label of any chemical product before using it.

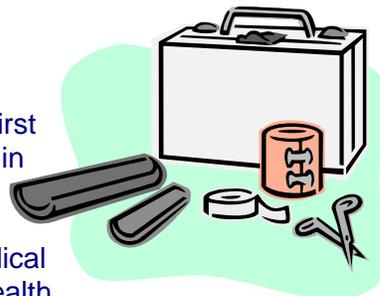
## Additional Travel Tips



- ➔ Consider bringing or renting car seats for your children if you plan to travel by automobile at your travel destination, i.e. exploring country roads, touring a city, etc.
- ➔ Pack helmets for your children if you are planning on renting bicycles at your destination.
- ➔ Keep your eyes on your children at all times. Hold their hands in crowded markets, squares and streets and don't let them wander about alone.
- ➔ Teach your children that the rules for crossing roads are different in each country. Don't step off the curb until you are absolutely sure it is safe to cross the road.

## Travel Health Kit

A basic travel health kit is important no matter where you travel. First Aid supplies and medications may not always be readily available in other countries and different from those available in Canada. A good travel health kit contains enough supplies to prevent illness, handle minor injuries and illnesses, and manage pre-existing medical conditions for more than the duration of your trip. Travel with a health kit so that First Aid supplies and medications will be easy to find in an emergency.



**Figure 1**

Consider taking a First Aid Course before you travel so that you will know how and when to use the First Aid supplies in your kit.

- 0.5% hydrocortisone cream to treat minor skin irritations, i.e. bug bites or poison ivy
- Adhesive bandages (multiple sizes) and adhesive tape
- Antibacterial and antifungal spray or cream to apply to wounds to prevent infection
- Antibacterial hand sanitizer
- Antiseptic wipes (for example, alcohol or iodine pads) to clean wounds
- Blister pads or moleskin
- Disposable latex or vinyl gloves
- First-aid quick reference card
- Gauze
- Packets of [oral rehydration salts](#) to treat dehydration caused by diarrhea
- Scissors for cutting tape and bandages
- Tensor bandage for sprains
- Thermometer

- Tweezers for removing ticks and splinters
- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- Insect repellent containing DEET
- Ear plugs for uses such as: Reducing noise to improve sleep; or preventing swimmer's ear by stopping contaminated water from entering the ear canal
- Extra pair of, or prescription for, glasses or contacts
- Mosquito net
- Water purification filter or tablets

## Medications

Discuss the use of medications with your Family Physician before you leave for your holiday and follow the directions for medication use carefully, including dosage and when to seek medical care. Bring more than enough medication to last your entire trip.



- If recommended, destination-specific medication, like medications for malaria, high-altitude sickness or motion sickness
- Any prescription or over-the-counter medication you normally use
- Allergy medication, such as an antihistamine or epinephrine auto-injector
- Anti-diarrheal medication for travellers' diarrhea
- Cold and flu medications, such as decongestants, cough suppressants, or throat lozenges
- Pain and fever medication, such as acetylsalicylic acid (e.g., Aspirin®) or acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®)
- Stomach and intestinal medication, such as antacids and laxatives



## Travel Advisory

To promote health and safety for all Canadians travelling or planning to live abroad, Foreign Trade and International Affairs has created a fabulous, all encompassing and very impressive web platform that provides official information and advice that will enable you to make well informed and practical, travelling decisions for you and your family.

This is the best 'Travel Advisory' website I have ever come across. It provides a *'think ahead'* practicality so you can make safe and well informed travel decisions. If you are considering a vacation abroad, I highly recommend you [subscribe](#) to this website.

The Canadian Government advises, "No matter where in the world you intend to travel, make sure you check the Travel Advice and Advisories page twice: once when you are planning your trip, and again shortly before you leave. If the region or the country you will be visiting becomes subject to a [Travel Advisory](#), it may affect your travel health insurance or your trip cancellation insurance.

Please click on the links below to view comprehensive information the 'Travel' provides on a daily basis:

[Latest Warnings](#) includes information on threats and conditions the Government of Canada considers unsafe for Canadians around the world including protests, natural disasters, health warnings, and other hazards.

Additional detailed information on conditions abroad, including the full list of countries and regions for which Travel Advisories are in effect, can be found on our [Country Travel Advice and Advisories](#) page and a full list of Travel Health Notices is available on our [Travel Health Notices](#) page.

[Country Travel Advice and Advisories](#) includes information on travelling abroad, travel documents, baggage and airport security, registration of Canadians abroad, children, living abroad, resources for travel counsellors, and publications.

[Returning to Canada](#) includes information on entering Canada, Customs, U.S. to Canada border wait times, if you get sick after travelling, and immigration for non-Canadian citizens.

[Assistance](#) includes information on Embassies and Consulates, Emergency Information and Requests for Emergency Assistance.

Some of the very important and up-to-date information that you will receive on a particular country or city will include:

- ➡ **Regional Advisories** – for specific areas within that country including road, air and rail travel
- ➡ **Security** – political situations, crime, women's safety, demonstrations, transportation, general safety information, sports and leisure activities and emergency services
- ➡ **Entry/Exit Requirements** – passport, visas, biometrics, screening measures, dual citizenships, port of entry, border crossings, children and travel, health entry requirements and same-sex marriages
- ➡ **Health** – information on outbreaks and diseases, medical facilities, health tips and



recommendations for vaccinations via consultations from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

- ➔ **Laws and Culture** – local laws you are subject to when travelling to a specific country and information on money and exchange rates
- ➔ **Disaster and Climate** – regional weather forecasts and disaster areas

