

# Travelers' Diarrhea

Traveling to areas of high risk (developing countries in Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Asia) and/or to areas of intermediate risk (countries in southern Europe or some Caribbean islands)?

Minimize Risks by:

- Careful choices of food and beverage
- Obtaining reliable drinking water
- For higher risk meals, consider taking Pepto-Bismol 2 tabs before meals and at bedtime for less than 3 weeks. Don't take this concurrently with doxycycline and with caution with aspirin. Check the bottle for complete information, including contraindications, but be advised that common side effects include black stool, black tongue, nausea, constipation and rarely, ringing in the ears. Don't use if you have symptoms of Dengue Fever (severe fever, head ache, joint and muscle pain, fatigue, fever) and you're in a dengue endemic area

You may have traveler's diarrhea if you have three or more loose stools in 24 hours. Drinking plenty of clear liquids to replace lost fluids from diarrhea is the cornerstone to treatment.

- Self-treatment for mild diarrhea (without fever or body aches): drink carbonated beverages, teas, juices, clear soups, water (if taken with salted crackers)
- Self-treatment for moderate diarrhea (loose or frequent stools with cramps, nausea or vomiting)
  - \* Consider antimotility drugs: take 4mg loperamide. If mild diarrhea continues, take additional 2 mg loperamide every 6 hours, not to exceed 16 mg/day.
    - Do not use if blood or pus in the stool
    - Stop use if symptoms continue after 48 hours of treatment
  - \*Maintain hydration
    - If no clinical symptoms of dehydration (urine is getting progressively darker or you don't need to urinate), take regular fluids by mouth and eat salty crackers
    - If profuse diarrhea or symptoms of dehydration, use oral rehydration salts (ORS)

Does diarrhea respond to use of antimotility drug within 3-6 hours?

Yes

No

Consider use of empiric antibiotics for severe diarrhea or if moderate diarrhea hasn't responded to antimotility drugs.

\* In most cases, a single dose of antibiotic is likely to be adequate, even for severe diarrhea. If symptoms persist after 24 hours, continue antibiotic for 2 more days.

Seek medical attention if you have bloody diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, fever over 101, worsening dehydration, symptoms are persisting despite antibiotic treatment, or you have non-gastrointestinal symptoms (such as stiff neck, rash, severe headache, etc.)

## FOR ADDITION INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS' HEALTH INFORMATION

<https://www.cdc.gov/> (Center for Disease Control)

[www.tripprep.com](http://www.tripprep.com) (malaria maps, etc.)

<https://www.astmh.org/>

<https://www.travmed.com/>

[IAMAT.org](http://IAMAT.org) (locations of clinics in developing countries, travel insurance)

[www.istm.org](http://www.istm.org) (location of clinics)

<https://www.who.int/> (World Health Organization)

<https://www.scs-mall.com/> (travel related products)