

You also need to take into consideration how much it will cost you in terms of communications and travel for you to stay in touch with your family and friends in Canada.

Medical Advice

It is a good idea to have a medical checkup before you go. You also need to plan carefully for your health needs once you have left Canada. Many nations have health care systems that most Canadians would consider inadequate. The cost of medical care outside Canada can be extremely high. Arrange for adequate private health care coverage before you leave Canada. Take copies of your prescriptions and an initial supply of non-prescription medicines.

Health Canada strongly recommends that you contact a travel medicine clinic or your physician six to eight weeks before departure. Based on an individual risk assessment, a health care provider can determine your need for immunizations and any special precautions that will help you avoid disease while abroad.

For more information or to obtain a list of travel clinics in your area, contact Health Canada at (613) 957-8739 or consult www.travelhealth.gc.ca. A list of travel clinics may also be obtained from the Canadian Society

for International Health at www.csih.org or (613) 241-5785.

Find out well in advance of your departure date if you need any special vaccinations or preventive medications for such illnesses as yellow fever, typhoid, meningitis, Japanese encephalitis, hepatitis or malaria. An International Certificate of Vaccination may be a legal requirement to enter certain countries. You can obtain this information from your doctor, the Canadian Society for International Health, or Health Canada's Travel Medicine Program. You may need to start receiving your vaccination shots or taking medication six to eight weeks before you leave.

Infectious diseases that aren't frequently seen in Canada occur and may even be widespread in other countries. Ensure that your immunizations—diphtheria, whooping cough (pertussis), tetanus, polio, measles, mumps and rubella—are up-to-date.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that could present a problem while you are outside Canada, it is wise to wear a MedicAlert® bracelet. Through the MedicAlert® Foundation, your vital medical facts become part of a database that can