

Travelling to your country of origin

Many foreign-born Canadians make regular trips to their birth countries to visit friends and relatives. In developing countries, these travellers – and especially their children – may be more vulnerable to preventable diseases than tourists because they tend to expose themselves to the same health risks as the local population.

If you and your family plan to travel to your country of origin, remember these facts:

- Any immunity to local diseases that you acquired while living in your country of origin may have greatly diminished.
- The disease situation you were familiar with in your home country may have changed.



Serena enjoyed the events held by family and friends to celebrate her first visit back to her homeland. Even though nine years had passed since she had moved to Canada, she didn't feel like a tourist at all. She re-entered her old world, reconnecting with her roots. Because she'd been born and raised there, she considered herself immune to common local infections, such as malaria. In fact, her natural immunity had weakened. When she became ill with fever back in Canada, she saw her doctor and mentioned her recent travel. She was tested and treated successfully for malaria, but it made a difficult end to what was intended to be the trip of a lifetime.

Just because you once lived there and are familiar with the culture and customs, don't assume you're safe from health risks. For instance, extended stays in rural locations may carry greater risks. While staying with family or friends, you may be exposed to untreated water and undercooked food or you may stay in accommodations