



Check If You Have Dual Nationality

To avoid unpleasant surprises, find out whether you, your spouse, or any other family member, are citizens of another country. If you are considered a "national", you may be compelled to do military service or pay special taxes. In extreme cases, you may not even be allowed to leave. Check your status with the country's embassy or consular mission in Canada before you leave.

If you do run into problems because of your dual nationality, contact the nearest Canadian mission immediately. Though they will be limited by the laws of the host country, they will help you where possible, and will keep relatives at home informed of your situation.

Access for People With Special Needs

Many countries do not provide access for people in wheelchairs or make allowances for those with special hearing, sight or other physical requirements. Contact your local access organization or talk to others who have travelled to your destination in the past. There are also several guides published on the topic of international travel for people with special needs. Check your local public library or bookstore.

Get Medical Advice Before You Go Away

Your family physician may be a good source of medical advice. As well, you can call the Quarantine Health Services division of Health Canada at (613) 957-8739 for information.

Vaccinations

Before travelling to exotic destinations, find out well in advance of your trip if you need any special vaccinations or preventive medications for such illnesses as yellow fever, typhoid, meningitis, Japanese encephalitis, hepatitis or malaria. Also make sure your tetanus shots are up-to-date.



Start your vaccination shots at least three months before you leave. In some cases, you may need several inoculations with waiting periods between each injection.

International Certificates of Vaccination as proof of immunization against yellow fever may be required by some countries as a condition of entry.

AIDS

AIDS/HIV is a global disease. Some countries have introduced AIDS testing for foreigners. Find out if you need a test before you travel.

When travelling, take all the same precautions you do at home. Do not assume that condoms will be readily available. Even if they are, they may not meet the safety standards set by the World Health Organization.

Remember: Using intravenous drugs is not only illegal but extremely risky — especially if you share needles.

Medication

If you take medication, be sure to pack an extra supply just in case you're away for longer than expected. Carrying a duplicate of your original prescription for this medication is a smart idea — especially when travelling to countries that are particularly sensitive about drugs. Also, carry an extra prescription from your doctor that lists both the generic and trade names of the drug, just in case your medication is lost or stolen. This is also a good idea if you wear glasses or contact lenses — having an extra prescription on hand makes replacing them easier.

Do not try to save luggage space by combining medications into a single container. Keep all medications in the original, labelled container to avoid problems.

Check to make sure that any medication you require is available in the country you are visiting. Also check to see that it is legal — some over-the-counter medications in Canada are illegal in other countries or require a prescription.