



EAT AND DRINK SAFELY

The most common illnesses among travellers are generally caused by eating food or drinking beverages contaminated by bacteria, parasites, or viruses. Always take precautions with food and water to avoid getting sick.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consult a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably six weeks before you travel.

EATING AND DRINKING

- Boil it, cook it, peel it or leave it!
- Always wash your hands before eating or preparing food. It is also important to remember to wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or having contact with animals or sick people.
 - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. It's a good idea to always keep some with you when you travel.
- Only eat foods that are well cooked and served hot. Avoid food served at room temperature.
- Avoid raw or undercooked (rare) meats and fish, including shellfish.
- Only eat fruits and vegetables if you have washed them in safe water or peeled them yourself.
- Avoid salads, or other items that are made with fresh produce.

- Avoid food from street vendors.
- Drink water only if it has been boiled or disinfected or if it is in a commercially sealed bottle.
- Use ice made only from purified or disinfected water.
- Commercially sealed beverages in cans or bottles and served unopened, such as carbonated drinks, and drinks made with boiled water and served steaming hot, such as coffee and tea, are generally safe.
- Brush your teeth with purified or bottled water.
- Avoid unpasteurized dairy products and fruit juices.

SWIMMING AND BATHING

- Water may look clean but could still be polluted or contaminated. You can get sick if you inhale or swallow it while bathing, showering or swimming.
- Try to avoid getting water into your mouth or nose when swimming or participating in activities in freshwater (streams, canals, lakes) or water in pools or hot tubs, which may not be adequately treated.



WATER TREATMENT METHODS

To ensure that water is safe to drink, there are several water treatment methods available for travellers. These methods include boiling, using chemical disinfectants, portable water filtration devices or ultraviolet light.

BOILING

- Boiling water is the best method to make water safe to drink.
- Water should be brought to a rolling boil for 1 minute.

CHEMICAL DISINFECTANTS

- Chlorine and iodine chemical disinfectants come in many forms including drops, tablets and packets of powder.
- The chemical disinfectant should be purchased in Canada, if possible.
- Chemical disinfectants may not remove all parasites. Water should also be filtered or boiled to ensure safety.
- Iodine containing disinfectants should not be used by children, pregnant women, persons with thyroid problems or known iodine sensitivity or for continuous use for more than a few weeks at a time.
- Chemical disinfectants should be used with caution.

The manufacturer's instructions should be followed carefully as this approach may not be effective or may be dangerous if used incorrectly.

PORTABLE FILTRATION DEVICES

- Portable filtration devices include ceramic filters, carbon filters and membrane filters.
- Filters should have a pore size of less than 0.5 microns to be most effective.
- Filters may not remove all viruses. Filtered water should also be purified using a chemical disinfectant or boiled to ensure safety.

ULTRAVIOLET (UV) LIGHT

- UV light devices are effective to disinfect small quantities of clear water. Germs in cloudy water can be shielded from the light by small particles.

BOTTLED WATER

- Bottled water from a trusted source is a convenient alternative to water purification. Prior to drinking bottled water, ensure the seal has not been tampered.

Health Canada provides further details about how to disinfect water, including instructions and advantages of each method.

RELATED LINKS

Assistance—sickness or injury while travelling:

www.travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/sick-injured

If you get sick after travelling:

www.travel.gc.ca/returning/sick

Vaccination:

www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/vaccines