

# **Travel Health Tips for Students Studying Abroad**

Excerpted From: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/japan.aspx> (to learn more and follow links referred to in this document, please go to this URL)

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## **Preparing for Your Trip to Japan**

**Before visiting Japan, you may need to get the following vaccinations and medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination:** (Note: Your doctor or health-care provider will determine what you will need, depending on factors such as your health and immunization history, areas of the country you will be visiting, and planned activities.)

To have the most benefit, see a health-care provider at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect.

Even if you have less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see a health-care provider for needed vaccines, medications, and information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

If your travel plans will take you to more than one country during a single trip, be sure to let your health-care provider know so that you can receive the appropriate vaccinations and information for all of your destinations. Long-term travelers, such as those who plan to work or study abroad, may also need additional vaccinations as required by their employer or school.

**Be sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date. Check the links below to see which vaccinations adults and children should get.**

**Routine vaccines**, as they are often called, such as for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) are given at all stages of life; see the [childhood and adolescent immunization schedule](#) and [routine adult immunization schedule](#).

Routine vaccines are recommended even if you do not travel. Although childhood diseases, such as measles, rarely occur in the United States, they are still common in many parts of the world. A traveler who is not vaccinated would be at risk for infection.

## **Vaccine-Preventable Diseases**

Vaccine recommendations are based on the best available risk information. Please note that the level of risk for vaccine-preventable diseases can change at any time.

## **Vaccination or Disease**      **Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases**

### **Routine**

Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.

### **Hepatitis B**

Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission ([see map](#)), especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).

### **Japanese encephalitis**

Recommended if you plan to visit rural farming areas and under special circumstances, such as a known outbreak of Japanese encephalitis, see [country-specific information](#).

**Rabies vaccination** is only recommended for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats. These travelers include wildlife professionals, researchers, veterinarians, or adventure travelers visiting areas where bats are commonly found.

## **Items to Bring with You**

### **Medicines you may need:**

- **The prescription medicines you take every day.** Make sure you have enough to last during your trip. Keep them in their original prescription bottles and always in your carry-on luggage. [Be sure to follow security guidelines](#), if the medicines are liquids.

Note: Some drugs available by prescription in the US are illegal in other countries. Check the US Department of State [Consular Information Sheets](#) for the country(s) you intend to visit or the embassy or consulate for that country(s). If your medication is not allowed in the country you will be visiting, ask your health-care provider to write a letter on office stationery stating the medication has been prescribed for you.

### **Other items you may need:**

- Sunblock and sunglasses for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays. See [Basic Information about Skin Cancer](#) for more information.
- To prevent insect/mosquito bites, bring:
  - Lightweight long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat to wear outside, whenever possible.

See other suggested over-the-counter medications and first aid items for a [travelers' health kit](#).

Note: Check the [Air Travel section](#) of the [Transportation Security Administration](#) website for the latest information about airport screening procedures and prohibited items.

## Other Diseases Found in Japan

Risk can vary between countries within this region and also within a country; the quality of in-country surveillance also varies.

The following are disease risks that might affect travelers; this is not a complete list of diseases that can be present. Environmental conditions may also change, and up to date information about risk by regions within a country may also not always be available.

[Japanese encephalitis](#) is found in wide areas of Japan.

A [measles](#) outbreak was reported in Japan in 2007.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) was also found in bird populations in Japan in 2003-2004. It continues to cause outbreaks in domestic and wild bird populations and has caused human cases in several East Asian countries. Avoid all direct contact with birds, including domestic poultry (such as chickens and ducks) and wild birds, and avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets where live birds are raised or kept. For a current list of countries reporting outbreaks of H5N1 among poultry and/or wild birds, view [updates from the World Organization for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#), and for total numbers of confirmed human cases of H5N1 virus by country see the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Avian Influenza website](#).

## Staying Healthy During Your Trip

### Prevent Insect Bites

Many diseases are spread through insect bites. One of the best protections is to prevent insect bites by:

- Using insect repellent (bug spray) with 30%-50% DEET. Picaridin, available in 7% and 15% concentrations, needs more frequent application. There is less information available on how effective picaridin is at protecting against all of the types of mosquitoes that transmit malaria.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outdoors.

For detailed information about insect repellent use, see [Insect and Arthropod Protection](#).

## Prevent Animal Bites and Scratches

Direct contact with animals can spread diseases like rabies or cause serious injury or illness. It is important to prevent animal bites and scratches.

- Be sure you are up to date with tetanus vaccination.
- Do not touch or feed any animals, including dogs and cats. Even animals that look like healthy pets can have rabies or other diseases.
- Help children stay safe by supervising them carefully around all animals.
- If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound well with soap and water and **go to a doctor right away**.
- After your trip, be sure to tell your doctor or state health department if you were bitten or scratched during travel.

For more information about rabies and travel, see the [Rabies chapter](#) of the [Yellow Book](#) or [CDC's Rabies homepage](#). For more information about how to protect yourself from other risks related to animals, see [Animal-Associated Hazards](#).

## Be Careful about Food and Water

Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Avoid unpasteurized dairy products.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea.

## Avoid Injuries

Car crashes are a leading cause of [injury](#) among travelers. Protect yourself from these injuries by:

- Not drinking and driving.
- Wearing your seat belt and using car seats or booster seats in the backseat for children.
- Following local traffic laws.
- Wearing helmets when you ride bikes, motorcycles, and motor bikes.
- Hiring a local driver, when possible.
- Avoiding night driving.

## Other Health Tips

- To avoid infections such as HIV and viral hepatitis do not share needles for tattoos, body piercing, or injections.
- To reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases always use latex condoms.

## After You Return Home

If you are not feeling well, you should see your doctor and mention that you have recently traveled. Also tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

**Important Note:** This document is not a complete medical guide for travelers to this region. Consult with your doctor for specific information related to your needs and your medical history; recommendations may differ for pregnant women, young children, and persons who have chronic medical conditions.