December 2012

The holiday season brings about travel plans for students and their families, but the important thing to remember is that caution is the key. For this issue of Health and Safety News, the focus will be on staying healthy while traveling. The information is taken directly from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) website http://www.cdc.gov/features/wintertravel/index.html. To read more about a topic in blue, click Open Hyperlink.

Flu-Free, Healthy Travel this Winter

Wherever you may be going this winter, protecting yourself and others from the flu is important. Here are some useful tips for staying healthy during the winter months.

Before Your Trip

Get vaccinated.

Vaccines are the most important tool we have for preventing the flu. If you have not gotten your vaccine already, it's important to get it before you travel. Flu vaccine is available in many places, including doctors’ offices, health departments, and pharmacies. Getting vaccinated now is a great way to protect yourself against the flu.

Prepare a travel health kit.

Remember that prevention can be travel-sized! Include items in your kit that might be helpful if you get sick, such as tissues, pain or fever medicine, soap, and an alcohol-based
hand rub to use in case soap and water are not available. For other health items to consider, see Pack Smart.

Travel only when you feel well.

Watch out for symptoms of the flu before your trip (see How do I know if I have the flu?).

If you think you have the flu or otherwise feel ill, delay your travel plans until your fever has been gone for at least 24 hours. Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Even if it means missing out on your plans, staying away from others when you're sick can help protect everyone's health.

If you have worrisome signs or symptoms, seek medical care.

During Your Trip

Take these steps to protect your health and the health of others:

Here are some simple things you can do to take care of yourself and keep others well:

- Remember to travel only when you feel well. (See above.)
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue. No tissue? Then cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.

Traveling outside the United States this winter?

- Learn about health information for your destination.
- Before you travel, see a doctor familiar with travel medicine to get any vaccines, medicines, and information you need to stay healthy.
- Talk to your doctor if you are at high risk for flu complications. Depending on your situation, your doctor may advise you to take antiviral medications with you when you travel, especially if appropriate medical care is not available at your destination.
- Know what to do if you become sick or injured on your trip.
- Visiting an area where there is a risk of malaria? If so, then seek medical care right away if you have a fever. The first symptoms of malaria usually include fever and chills, similar to the symptoms of the flu. However, if malaria is left untreated, the disease can quickly become serious and even life threatening.

Reference:

Content source: Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases