

Travellers' Diarrhea

Sudden onset of loose or liquid stools (💩) while travelling. Symptoms can include cramps, urgent loose stools, stomach pain, fever, vomiting, and bloody diarrhea. Usually lasts 2 to 4 days.

1 Before the trip: Identify risk of destination

High Risk

- Asia
- The Middle East
- Africa
- Central and South America

Intermediate Risk

- Eastern Europe
- South Africa
- Mexico
- Caribbean Islands

Low Risk

- United States
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Japan
- Northern and Western Europe

Travellers should bring:

Oral Rehydration Solution (e.g., *Gastrolyte*)

- Replaces water and salts that are lost through diarrhea
- Especially important for kids
- Helps you to feel better, faster

Loperamide (e.g., *Imodium*)

- Slows the movement of diarrhea through the gut
- Takes 1 - 2 hours to take effect

Antibiotic

- Kills the bacteria that cause travellers' diarrhea
- Azithromycin is preferred
- Ciprofloxacin/levofloxacin are options, but have high rates of resistance in SE Asia
- Can be given as a single day or 3 day prescription
- Takes 12 - 36 hours to take effect

2 Prevention during the trip



Wash hands often with either soap or hand sanitizer



Only eat fully cooked foods that are still hot



Use bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth



Avoid ice cubes, salads, and uncooked veggies



Eat fruits that can be peeled and peel your own fruit



Optional: Bismuth subsalicylate 4 times a day while travelling

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3 Treatment during the trip

Patients should begin self-treatment according to severity:

	How bad?	What to do?
Mild	Diarrhea does not interfere with daily plans	May use loperamide or bismuth subsalicylate
Moderate	Diarrhea is tolerable but interferes with daily plans	May use loperamide and/or antibiotic
Severe	Diarrhea prevents all planned activities	May use loperamide, <u>should</u> use antibiotic
Dysentery	Diarrhea is mixed with blood (<i>not just blood on the toilet paper</i>)	DO NOT use loperamide, <u>should</u> use antibiotic



Bloody diarrhea is called dysentery



Use oral rehydration solution for all types of diarrhea



Seek medical attention if diarrhea not improving in 24 - 36 hours

4 After the trip



Up to 10% of people have complications from Travellers' Diarrhea

- Stool testing may be required for severe diarrhea or diarrhea lasting at least 2 weeks
- Colonoscopy may be required to assess for irritable bowel syndrome that lasts for months to years after travellers' diarrhea
- Complications can include the rare risk of reactive arthritis and Guillain-Barré syndrome

