

## TRAVELER'S DIARRHEA

Traveler's diarrhea is the most common infectious disease experienced by international travelers. Bacteria, viruses and parasites present in food or drink can cause gastrointestinal upset with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. Between 30-70% of travelers experience traveler's diarrhea.

### PREVENTION IS KEY!

- > Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before eating
- > Do not use tap water for drinking or brushing teeth. Avoid ice. Carbonated water, soda, beer and wine are safer beverages
- > Avoid unpasteurized dairy products
- > Avoid food of questionable preparation (poor hygiene)
- > Eat fruits with a thick peel and vegetables that have been cooked
- > Adults may take Pepto-Bismol® (bismuth subsalicylate) to prevent diarrhea. For prevention, take 1-2 tabs every 6 hours. This dosing is about 60% effective. You may experience side effects such as constipation, ringing in the ears, black tongue and black stools. Do not take Pepto Bismol® if you are allergic to aspirin or take coumadin, methotrexate or probenecid or have a history of renal insufficiency or gout.



**SYMPTOMS & TREATMENT**

Most diarrhea resolves with simple measures such as hydration and rest. Consider carrying loperamide (Imodium), antibiotics (prescribed by your health-care provider) and oral rehydration salts (ORS/drip drop). Please see the table below for self-treatment options for diarrhea.

	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Mild diarrhea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 3-4 episodes of watery diarrhea in 24 hours with abdominal cramps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Hydrate with clear fluids</li> <li>&gt; Take loperamide (Imodium AD<sup>®</sup>) per package instructions. Loperamide slows down gut movement.</li> <li>&gt; Eat easy to digest foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Consult your pediatrician about dosing of loperamide in children</li> <li>&gt; Do not use loperamide if experiencing bloody diarrhea</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate diarrhea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Increased frequency of diarrhea</li> <li>&gt; Fever up to 101°F (38.3°C)</li> <li>&gt; Moderate abdominal cramping</li> <li>&gt; Nausea/vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Clear fluids or oral rehydration salts (ORS) like Pedialyte<sup>®</sup></li> <li>&gt; Loperamide and consider antibiotic treatment (see below) with azithromycin, ciprofloxacin, or rifaximin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Antidepressants, such as Prozac<sup>®</sup> may interact with antibiotics (i.e., azithromycin and ciprofloxacin)</li> <li>&gt; Avoid ciprofloxacin if breastfeeding or pregnant. Minimize use if &gt;60 years or susceptible to tendon injury or rupture.</li> </ul>
<b>Severe diarrhea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Diarrhea that is not responsive to antibiotic treatment</li> <li>&gt; Abdominal pain</li> <li>&gt; Dehydration</li> <li>&gt; Bloody diarrhea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Prompt medical evaluation for parasitic infection or resistant bacteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Tinidazole is used to treat giardiasis and amoebiasis (see below)</li> </ul>

Antibiotic treatment

**Azithromycin (Zithromax®)**

- > Adults: 500 mg (2 capsules) daily until diarrhea resolves
- > Children and teens under 18: Dosing based on weight. Tablet or powder.

**Ciprofloxacin (Cipro®)**

- > Adults: 500 mg every 12 hours until diarrhea resolves
- > Children and teens under 18: Avoid use

**Rifaximin (Xifaxan®)**

- > Adults and children over the age of 12: 200 mg 3 times a day for 3 days. (For use in patients that cannot take antibiotics listed above.)

**Tinidazole (Fasigyn®, Tiniba®)**

- > Giardiasis: 2 mg once
- > Amoebiasis: 2 mg once daily for 3 days

Diarrhea in Kids

Children under 5 years are particularly susceptible to dehydration. Encourage frequent sips of clear liquids and continue breastfeeding infants.

An infant or toddler should have at least one wet diaper every 4-6 hours. If the period between wet diapers exceeds 4-6 hours, the child needs more fluids and should be seen by a health care provider.

Parents should have a low threshold for seeking medical care if children experience persistent diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or blood in stool.