



Travel Medicine FAQs

1. What is a travel medicine specialist?

A travel medicine specialist is a healthcare professional who provides vaccines, medications, recommendations, and other services to help prepare you for safe, healthy travel overseas.

The Saratoga Hospital travel medicine team includes:

- A travel medicine nurse with specialized training in yellow fever and vaccine administration and handling,
- An emergency medicine and occupational medicine physician, and
- A nurse practitioner and physician assistant, both with extensive experience in occupational medicine.

2. Who should see a travel medicine specialist?

- Travelers who want comprehensive, customized information, prescriptions, and vaccines that can help you stay well during your trip,
- Those traveling to developing countries,
- Those traveling to countries where malaria or yellow fever is common,
- First-time international travelers,
- Members of special populations or those with special circumstances:
 - Older travelers,
 - Female travelers, especially those who are pregnant,
 - Children,
 - Those with chronic illnesses or immunosuppression, and
 - Those traveling to visit friends and relatives.

3. How far in advance should I be seen?

- Six to eight weeks is ideal because some vaccines (Hepatitis A, B) require several doses, over several months. We recommend that you contact us for an appointment as soon as you know your destination.
- Even last-minute travelers can benefit from a consultation, so don't hesitate to make an appointment – even if your trip is around the corner.

4. Is there anything I should do before my appointment?

- If possible, bring your immunization records. If you are in your 20s or younger and were raised in New York State, most likely we can access your records electronically.
- Avoid receiving a vaccine that's made from a live virus (e.g. vaccines for yellow fever, MMR, chicken pox/varicella, shingles/Zostavax, and nasal flu mist.) Vaccines made with live viruses must all be given on the same day. If given individually, such vaccines must be spaced at least 28 days apart.

5. What vaccinations will I need before my trip?

That depends on your destination and the activities that you're planning.

- Your routine immunizations—annual influenza, tetanus booster (every 10 years), primary series of MMR, chicken pox/varicella, and polio—must be current, regardless of where you're traveling.
- Based on your travel plans, we may also recommend vaccinations for yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, meningitis, rabies, and a polio booster. Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccinations are recommended for most developing countries.



6. What medications may I need?

That, too, depends on your travel plans. Recommendations may include anti-malaria medications and medicines for traveler's diarrhea and altitude illness.

7. What if I become ill after receiving a vaccine?

- If you have hives, swelling of the throat or tongue, or trouble breathing, call 911 immediately.
- If you received the yellow fever vaccine within the past month and are feeling sick—headache, body aches, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, mental status changes, bruising or yellowing of the skin—go to a hospital Emergency Department.
- For all other situations, if you are experiencing any symptoms that you think are related to your vaccinations, please call us at 518-886-5419.

8. What if I have returned from foreign travel and am ill?

- If you have fever or flu-like symptoms, especially if you were in an area where malaria or yellow fever is common, go to a hospital Emergency Department. Be sure to tell them about your recent travel. Most people who become ill after being exposed to malaria show symptoms within three months. However, malaria can occur years after exposure.
- For minor illnesses (diarrhea or skin rash), contact your primary care provider.

The Travel Medicine service does not provide post-travel medical care. However, we do supply your primary care provider with information on the vaccines and medications that we provided. We are also readily available to discuss your situation—including the risks you may have encountered overseas—with your other healthcare providers.

9. How much does a consultation cost, and how is payment handled?

Most visits cost \$150 and take 60 to 90 minutes to complete. In addition, vaccination fees can range from \$15-\$325.

Payment is expected at the time of your visit. We accept cash, check, or charge. Most insurance plans do not cover travel medicine services. We will provide an invoice to submit to your insurer or employer.

10. How do I make an appointment?

Call Saratoga Hospital's Travel Medicine nurse at 518-886-5419 or email travelmedicinurse@saratogacare.org. We will provide you with a pre-travel assessment form, which must be completed before your appointment.

We are located at 2388 Route 9 Malta, NY 12020 at the corner of Route 9 and Knabner Road between exits 11 and 12 off I-87. Our mailing address for patient forms is 2388 Route 9, Mechanicville, NY 12118.