

Traveller's diarrhoea

It is the most common health problem associated with international travel. Around 40% of travellers experience diarrhoea during a trip to the tropics or shortly afterwards.

Destinations with the highest risk of traveller's diarrhoea include most countries in **Africa, Asia (except Japan and South Korea), the Middle East**, as well as Mexico and the rest of **Central and South America**.

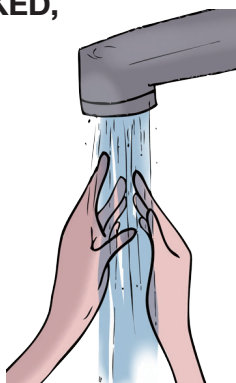
The risk is lower but still present when travelling to **Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand**.

The most common cause is infection, and transmission occurs through contaminated food or drink.

How to prevent traveller's diarrhoea

The WHO recommends: **"COOKED, PEELED or FORGET IT"**.

1. Wash your hands frequently, before and after eating, handling food and using the toilet. If this isn't possible, it's a good idea to carry your own hand sanitiser.
2. For **drinks** such as water, soft drinks or hot beverages, make sure they are sealed or opened in front of you.
3. Do not have **ice** in your drinks if you do not know the source of the water. Do not drink fresh **fruit juices** that are not commercially packaged.
4. Choose **food that is well cooked and served hot**; avoid eating raw food, milk, ice cream or dairy products from unreliable sources, or raw food from street vendors.
5. **Peel the fruit yourself** and do not eat raw vegetables or salads that you have not washed yourself.



There is no effective medication for preventing diarrhoea. The use of certain vaccines and antibiotics is controversial.

Treatment of water and potentially hazardous raw foods

Boiling: for at least 1 minute (up to 3 minutes at high altitudes). Aerate it to improve the taste.

Chlorination: 2 drops of bleach (suitable for human consumption) per litre. Wait 30 minutes before drinking.

Iodine and water purification tablets can be an effective way to make water safe to drink.

What symptoms does it cause?

The symptoms include watery stools and/or more frequent bowel movements, nausea, abdominal pain, fever and general malaise. The diarrhoea lasts for 3 to 7 days.

What should you do if you have diarrhoea?

The most important thing is to stay well hydrated. You can use:

1. Oral rehydration solution. Dissolve one sachet in 1 litre of drinking water.
2. Homemade oral rehydration solution. You can make this at home using:
 - One litre of drinking water.
 - Two heaped tablespoons of sugar, half a teaspoon of salt and half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda.
 - The juice of one lemon.

Consult a doctor if there is blood or mucus in the stools, repeated vomiting, a high fever, if the diarrhoea persists, if other symptoms appear or if you have a chronic illness.