

Limiting the Spread: Travel, Social Contact and Pandemic Flu

This fact sheet provides travellers with guidelines for staying healthy during a flu pandemic.

Travel Guidelines During An Influenza Pandemic

During an influenza pandemic social distancing measures may be implemented to limit the spread of the disease. Depending on the severity of the pandemic, international, domestic and even local public transport and travel may be restricted, suspended or modified.

If you are sick, stay home and keep away from other people as much as possible.

If long-distance domestic or international travel is permitted and you are feeling well and you must travel, observe the following recommendations to limit your chances of getting sick:

What Should I Do Before I Travel?

- Get the most current available seasonal flu vaccine to avoid being infected with circulating flu viruses.
- Make sure your immunizations for the country you are visiting are up-to-date.
- Purchase supplementary insurance when travelling outside of Canada as many emergency health services provided outside of the country cost much more than your Ontario Health Insurance Plan may pay. You should also consider the possibility of medical evacuation coverage.
- Educate yourself and others who may be travelling with you about the risk of influenza in areas you plan to visit. Check the Department of Foreign and International Trade Canada website at www.voyage.gc.ca

- Assemble a travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies. Get the right advice about this from your travel agent or provider.
- Pack hand sanitizer containing 60 to 90 per cent alcohol in your luggage and carry-on as permitted.
- Identify health care resources in the countries you plan to visit before your trip.

What Should I Do While I'm Travelling?

- Performing frequent and proper hand hygiene is the most important step you can take to reduce your chances of infection. Clean your hands often, using either soap or warm, running water or hand sanitizers, containing 60 to 90 per cent alcohol.
- Reduce direct social contact (e.g., kissing, shaking hands). Stay away from mass social gatherings and crowded public places as much as possible.
- Avoid direct contact with poultry, including touching well-appearing, sick, or dead chickens and ducks. Avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets where live poultry are raised or kept.
- If you are preparing your own food, ensure that all foods from poultry, including eggs, are thoroughly cooked.
- Ensure all birds and poultry products you wish to bring into Canada are eligible for entry and declare all animal products upon arrival.

- If you have visited a farm while in an affected country ensure that clothing and footwear worn on the farm are free from soil and manure before entering Canada.

What Should I Do After I Travel?

You can be infected with the flu without displaying any symptoms or feeling sick. To avoid infecting others and spreading the virus, follow these recommendations:

- Wash your clothing in hot water and disinfect your footwear after arrival, especially if you have visited a farm.
- Monitor your health for at least 14 days after returning to Canada. If you become ill with fever, have difficulty breathing, cough, or show any signs of illness during this period, consult a health care professional. Tell her/him about your symptoms and recent travel to confirm whether you have visited an area reporting an outbreak of pandemic influenza.

For More Information

Visit our website at
www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic

Call INFOline 1-866-801-7242

TTY 1-800-387-5559