



Resource Information on Immunizations and Zika virus El Salvador Immersion Program

The information of this document has been revised by our Lay Missioners in El Salvador, who helped me getting all the necessary information about the immunizations choices and zika virus prevention as you prepare to travel to El Salvador.

It is also updated with the current information on the CDC website:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/el-salvador>.

In this document we emphasize that **each participant needs to make this choice under the advisement of his or her own physician.** We simply provide this sheet as a resource to you and your doctor as you make your decision.

What can travelers do to prevent zika, chikungunya, and dengue viruses?

We do not recommend pregnant women, in any trimester, travel to El Salvador at this time.

There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat zika, chikungunya, or dengue. Travelers can protect themselves by **preventing mosquito bites:**

- ✓ Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- ✓ Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), or IR3535. Always use as directed. Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself.
- ✓ Stay and sleep in screened-in or air-conditioned rooms.

If you feel sick and think you may have Zika:

- ✓ Talk to your doctor or nurse if you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Tell him or her about your travel.
- ✓ Take medicine, such as acetaminophen or paracetamol, to relieve fever and pain. Do not take aspirin, products containing aspirin, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen.
- ✓ Get lots of rest and drink plenty of liquids.
- ✓ Prevent additional mosquito bites to avoid spreading the disease.

Please read about the zika, chikungunya and dengue viruses at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

Where We'll Be in El Salvador.

In order to make the best decision about immunizations, you'll need to know where in El Salvador you plan to go. While you'll be spending most of your time in the city of San Salvador. Additionally, you'll be making visits to rural areas. **You will not be in a malaria risk area.**

You are going to have a wonderful experience! Please do not let rumors of extremely rare diseases haunt you. Healthy American travelers like you may pick-up what is called "**travelers' diarrhea**", uncomfortable yes, but it is not dangerous. There is no special immunization against this hazard. Bring along **Imodium and Pepto Bismol**, drink bottled water (will be provided), rest, and let your own immune system do the rest.

Prevention is your best weapon. No immunizations are 100% effective. Just follow the guidelines regarding what you put into your mouth, wash hands frequently with soap (bring a liquid antibacterial soap) and water, and **bring bug repellent with DEET. Very Important: Don't accept ice at restaurants.**

The CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) has some immunization recommendations for your specific El Salvador experience:

[Recommended Vaccinations and Preventive Medications](#) (as appropriate for ages)

Discuss your travel plans and personal health with a health-care provider to determine which vaccines you will need. See your doctor at least 4 weeks before your trip to allow time for immunizations to take effect. All the following recommendations are to help keep you healthy.

1. **Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).** Transmission of hepatitis A virus can occur through direct person-to-person contact; through exposure to contaminated water, ice, or shellfish harvested in contaminated water; or from fruits, vegetables, or other foods that are eaten uncooked and that were contaminated during harvesting or subsequent handling.
2. **Hepatitis B.** This is recommended only as prevention in the case you need a medical visit/treatment in case of illness or accident, otherwise you will not be exposed to blood or body fluids. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants.
3. **Typhoid vaccine.** Typhoid fever can be contracted through contaminated drinking water or food, or by eating food or drinking beverages that have been handled by a person who is infected. Large outbreaks are most often related to fecal contamination of water supplies or foods sold by street vendors. Our lay missionaries will take all preventative measures to avoid any infection.
4. **Routine.** Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.

[Required Vaccinations](#)= **NONE.**

Each person needs to become informed and make a choice about which immunizations to take. How does one make these choices? Participants approach the issue from a range of philosophies. Some will want to take every possible immunization. Others will prefer the minimum. It's up to you. I hope this info helps you.

[What You Need To Bring With You](#)

- ✓ Insect repellent containing DEET.
- ✓ Sunblock, sunglasses, and a hat for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays.
- ✓ **Prescription medications:** make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s) or letter from your health-care provider on office stationery explaining that the medication has been prescribed for you.
- ✓ Always carry medications in their original containers, in your carry-on luggage.
- ✓ Be sure to bring along **over-the-counter antidiarrheal medication** (e.g., bismuth subsalicylate, loperamide) to self-treat moderate diarrhea.
- ✓ Bring hand sanitizer in case we are in a place without soap or water.

March 30, 2016