TRAVELERS' DIARRHEA
FACT SHEET

KEY FACTS

- Travelers' diarrhea is the most common travel-related illness
- It can happen in any place, but is more common in visitors to Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America
- It is often caused by bacteria spread through unsafe food or water
- In most cases, illness is mild and only lasts for a few days

SYMPTOMS

- Loose or watery stools, stomach cramps, nausea, fever, and weakness are common symptoms
- In most cases, symptoms are mild and go away on their own in three to four days
- Children are at higher risk of dehydration due to fluid loss

PREVENTION

- **Choose your food and drinks wisely:** Eat fully cooked foods served piping hot. Choose drinks in sealed bottles or cans. Avoid raw fruits and vegetables and drinks that contain ice.
- **Brush your teeth with clean water:** Use bottled water or boil tap water for at least one minute (3 minutes at high altitudes)
- **Wash your hands often:** especially after using the toilet and before eating food. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

TREATMENT

- **Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.** Oral rehydration solutions available at pharmacies can help to replace lost salts and minerals.
- **Consider over-the-counter drugs like loperamide** to treat diarrhea symptoms.
- **Only take antibiotics if needed and as prescribed by a doctor or health professional.** Consider using them only for severe or distressing symptoms.
- **See your doctor** if you have severe or persistent symptoms, and ask for a stool test.

MORE INFORMATION

Travelers are advised to check official health information from their own country, such as:

- Travel Health Pro, United Kingdom: [https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/53/travellers-diarrhoea](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/53/travellers-diarrhoea)

References


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