



## Traveling with Kids: A Parent's Medical Packing & Preparation Guide

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Travel is exciting — but being medically prepared makes it smoother (and less stressful!). Below is a practical checklist of what to pack, how to prepare, and answers to common travel health questions.

**Medications List:** Bring medications in original containers whenever possible.

- **Fever & Pain**
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin)
  - ☞ Dosing guide here: [Fever/Pain Med Guide](#)
- **Allergy Medications**
  - Cetirizine (Zyrtec), Loratadine (Claritin), or Allegra (Fexofenadine)
  - ☞ Dosing guide here: [Allergy Med Guide](#)
- **Cough & Cold**
  - Saline spray
  - Nasal suction (for infants)
  - Honey (over age 1)
  - ☞ Dosing guide here: [Cough/Cold Med Guide](#)
- **Stomach Illness**
  - Oral rehydration solution (Pedialyte packets are great for travel)
  - Ondansetron/Zofran (if prescribed)
  - Probiotic (optional)
  - ☞ Guide here: [Stomach Virus Guide](#)
- **Skin Care**
  - Hydrocortisone 1% ointment (Anti-itch for bites or rashes)
  - Antibiotic ointment (bacitracin, triple antibiotic, Neosporin)
  - Bandages
  - Diaper ointment
  - Aloe Vera
  - ☞ Skin Handouts (bug bites, eczema, impetigo, diaper rash): [Skin Handouts](#)  
Ointment is less “sting-y” and often tolerated better in kids than creams or lotion
- **Other Helpful Items**
  - Prescription medications (bring extra days’ supply)
  - Inhalers + spacer or nebulizer/mask/tubing (if needed)
  - EpiPen (if prescribed)
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Digital thermometer



## Sunscreen & Bug Spray

### Sunscreen Tips

- SPF 30 or higher
- Broad spectrum (UVA/UVB)
- Reapply every 2 hours
- Infants under 6 months: avoid direct sun when possible

For families seeking lower-toxicity options, view [EWG Sunscreen Guide](#)

### Bug Spray Tips

- DEET (10–30%) is safe and effective for children over 2 months
- Picaridin is another well-tolerated option
- Apply after sunscreen
- Avoid hands and face

EWG's consumer guide to insect repellents: [EWG Bug Repellent Guide](#)

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## Traveling to Altitude

If traveling to mountains (generally above 6,000–8,000 feet):

### Common Symptoms of Altitude Sickness

- Headache
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Poor sleep

Most mild symptoms improve in 24–48 hours.

### How to Prepare

- Hydrate well before and during travel
- Avoid overexertion on day 1–2
- Gradually increase activity
- Eat regular meals
- Prioritize sleep

### Seek Care If:

- Severe headache not improving
- Persistent vomiting
- Trouble breathing at rest
- Confusion

Infants and young children cannot always describe symptoms — watch for irritability, poor feeding, or lethargy.

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## Ear Pain on Takeoff & Landing

Pressure changes can cause ear discomfort, especially in young children.

### Helpful Tips:

Infants:

- Breastfeed or bottle during ascent/descent
- Offer pacifier

Toddlers & older kids:

- Chew gum
- Sip water
- Blow gently against pinched nose (older children only)
- Yawn or swallow repeatedly

If your child has a cold, using saline spray before takeoff may help.



## Motion Sickness

More common after age 2–3.

Helpful tips:

- Seat child where they can see forward
- Avoid screens in the car
- Small, light meals before travel
- Fresh air if possible

For children over 2:

👉 Dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) may be used: [Motion Sickness Med Guide](#)

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## Preventing Travel Illness

- Encourage frequent handwashing
- Carry sanitizing wipes for trays and armrests
- Stay hydrated (planes are very dry)
- Keep sleep routines as consistent as possible

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## Commonly Asked Travel Questions

### • Should I bring antibiotics “just in case”?

No — antibiotics should only be used when prescribed for a confirmed bacterial infection.

### • What if my child gets sick on vacation?

- Fever alone is not an emergency if child is hydrated and alert.
- Seek care if trouble breathing, severe pain, dehydration, or persistent vomiting.

### • How do I manage jet lag?

- Gradually shift to bedtime before travel
- Get morning sunlight at destination
- Keep naps short first few days
- 👉 Jet Lag and time change guide here: [PAA Jet Lag and Travel Vaccine Guide](#)

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## ♥ Final Travel Tips

- Pack medications in your carry-on.
- Bring more medication than you think you’ll need.
- Keep a photo of insurance cards and medication lists.
- Know where the nearest urgent care is at your destination.
- When in doubt, call us.



## Traveling with Kids – QR Code References

