

# Traveling With Children

Hilliard Pediatrics, Inc. - Dr. Tim Teller, MD

## Introduction

Many of the children in our practice become accomplished travelers, whether by car, plane, or otherwise. The general recommendations are similar to those with adults: bring a snack and something to do!

## Flying

- Children generally tolerate flying well. Although you may picture an unhappy child you once saw on an air plane as the norm, many children can comfortably fly in airplanes. Keeping them occupied with something to do (a favorite or new, interesting toy; their special blanket; etc.) certainly helps. Many toddlers on planes are upset because they want to explore and wander around while their parents are trying to keep them from doing so.
- To help **keep your child's ears comfortable**, we need to help equalize the pressure across the ear drum. Just as with adults, allowing older children to chew gum as the airplane takes off and lands will help with any discomfort. With infants and young children, allowing them to breast feed or drink from a cup or bottle as the airplane takes off and lands with help. Using a pacifier on take-off and landing will also help in the same way.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children less than 40 pounds use a **child safety seat while flying**. Children greater than 40 pounds can be secured in the airplane seat using the aircraft seat belt.
- We are frequently asked whether children can be sedated with **Benadryl®** (Allergy Elixir) before travel. This can be helpful, but remember that some children act the exact opposite (and act wide awake and agitated) when given an antihistamine to sedate them. Therefore, if you plan to do this, give a "test dose" sometime before the trip so you can tell how your child will react. The doses for the over-the-counter Benadryl® Allergy Elixir (12.5 mg./5ml.; generic diphenhydramine is fine) are as follows. The doses can be repeated every 6 hours.
  - Less than 25 pounds - 1/2 tsp. (2.5 mL)
  - 25-49 pounds - 1 tsp. (5 mL)
  - 50 pounds - 2 tsp. (10 mL)

## Travel Sickness

- Some children are prone to nausea, dizziness, and sometimes vomiting with travel, whether by car, boat, or air plane. Children prone to this motion sickness or travel sickness, it may be helpful to use the over-the-counter product **Dramamine®** (diminhydrinate) before travel. This is available as chewable tablets. The dosage is as follows. 2-5 years of age: 1/4 – 1/2 chewable tablet every 6-8 hours as needed; 6-11 years of age: 1/2 -1 tablet every 6-8 hours as needed; and 12 years of age and above: 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed. Dramamine is an antihistamine like Benadryl®, which can also be used for preventing motion

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sickness (using the doses above). As with Benadryl®, giving a test dose before you travel is recommended.

- Note that the prescription motion sickness prevention medications that are available for adults are not approved for use with children. For teenagers who struggle with travel sickness, we have prescribed the Transderm Scop® (scopolamine 1.5 mg) patch. Call during routing hours to ask about this. The scopolamine patch is applied to the skin on a hairless area behind the ear. It is applied 4 hours before the activity. The patches can work for up to 72 hours. If the travel continued after the first patch stopped working, remove the patch and apply another one. The leading side effect is drowsiness or dizziness.
- The Centers for Disease Control website has helpful information about traveling with children at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/children>

## International Travel

Depending on what country you are traveling to with your child, the immunizations that they have already received may be all that is required. However, many countries require some special vaccines that are not carried by our office. For information about which shots are needed prior to foreign travel, you may call the **Ohio Department of Health** at (ph) **614-466-3543** or check the Centers for Disease Control website on the Internet at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/traveler-information-center>.

For consultations and vaccinations before international travel, a number of Central Ohio offices provide this service. Please call their office (or check their website) for more information. Some of these offices with only provide care for children 2 years of age and older.

- **Travel and Immigration Clinic.** Dr. Ronald Bloomfield, M.D.
  - 745 West State Street, Suite 610, Columbus, Ohio 43222 (ph) 614-224-9052
  - [www.drbloomfield.com](http://www.drbloomfield.com)
- **OSU Rardin Family Practice.**
  - 2231 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43201. (ph) 614-293-2700 opt. 5
  - [http://medicalcenter.osu.edu/patientcare/hospitals\\_locations/primary\\_care/locations/pages/rardin.aspx](http://medicalcenter.osu.edu/patientcare/hospitals_locations/primary_care/locations/pages/rardin.aspx)
- **Travel Health Services.** Suzanne Stanek, R.N., C.N.P. and Bryan Ghiloni, M.D.
  - 7219 Sawmill Road, Suite 105 C, Dublin, Ohio 43016. (ph) 614-889-6911
  - <http://travelhealthservices.net/>
- **Passport Health Dublin.**
  - 5890 Sawmill Road, Dublin Ohio, 43017. (ph) 614-453-3920
  - <http://www.passporthealthusa.com/locations/oh/columbus/columbus-area-clinic-locations/dublin-oh-clinic/>