

Norovirus Travel Protocol: Gut & Immune Support

This protocol is designed to reduce your risk of norovirus while traveling and to support gut and immune resilience before, during, and after your trip. Norovirus is highly contagious, resistant to many disinfectants, and primarily spreads through contaminated food, water, surfaces, and hands.

Before You Travel (2–4 Weeks Prior)

- **Strengthen gut barrier function:** Prioritize protein intake and include nutrients that support the intestinal lining such as zinc, glutamine, and collagen-rich foods.
- **Potent probiotics:** Begin a high-quality, multi-strain probiotic at least **one full month before travel**, including Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium species. Consider adding Saccharomyces boulardii, which has evidence for reducing traveler's diarrhea.
- **Optimize stomach acid:** Adequate stomach acid is a first-line defense against pathogens. Avoid unnecessary antacids if tolerated.
- **Reduce inflammatory burden:** Minimize alcohol, ultra-processed foods, and excess sugar leading up to travel.
- **Immune priming:** Ensure adequate vitamin D, vitamin C, zinc, and selenium status prior to departure.

During Travel

- **Hand hygiene:** Wash hands with soap and water frequently, especially before eating. Alcohol-based sanitizers are less effective against norovirus.
- **Oral hygiene caution:** Do not brush your teeth with tap water while traveling. Use bottled or purified water to avoid oral exposure to contaminated water.
- **Food and water caution:** Avoid raw or undercooked foods, unwashed produce, buffet foods, and ice of unknown water quality.
- **Continue probiotics:** Maintain daily probiotics and Saccharomyces boulardii throughout the trip.
- **Use antimicrobial foods:** Consume generous amounts of ginger, lemon, lime, vinegar, and other sour or bitter foods, which help suppress pathogenic microbes and support digestion.
- **Support bile flow:** Eat regular meals and include bitter foods or lemon water to support digestion and microbial defense.
- **Hydration with electrolytes:** Maintain hydration with minerals, not just plain water.
- **Immune support on exposure days:** Temporarily increase vitamin C and zinc if flying, cruising, or in crowded settings.

If Symptoms Begin

- **Immediate hydration:** Use oral rehydration solutions with sodium, potassium, and glucose.
- **Temporary gut rest:** Light, easily digestible foods or short-term fasting may reduce symptom severity.
- **Saccharomyces boulardii:** Can be used short-term to help reduce duration of diarrhea.
- **Avoid anti-diarrheal suppression unless necessary:** Allowing pathogen clearance is often protective.

After You Return (1–2 Weeks)

- **Rebuild gut microbiome:** Continue probiotics and include fermented foods if tolerated.
- **Repair intestinal lining:** Focus on protein, zinc, glutamine, omega-3 fats, and polyphenol-rich foods.
- **Address lingering symptoms:** Persistent bloating, loose stools, or nausea may indicate post-infectious gut dysfunction.
- **Support detoxification and immunity:** Prioritize sleep, sunlight, hydration, and nutrient-dense meals.

This protocol is for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice. Seek medical care for severe dehydration, persistent vomiting, blood in stool, or symptoms lasting longer than expected.