

# Don't let germs spoil your holiday getaway

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(HealthDay)—Headed out for a New Year's getaway? Remember: not only will travelers be packing themselves into cars, trains, buses and airplanes, but germs will, too.

Fortunately, there are ways to keep [germs](#) at bay. Donna Duberg, assistant professor of biomedical laboratory science at Saint Louis University, offers these tips for travelers:

- **Use a hand sanitizer.** "I use it every time I grab a drink or a cookie, sit down to rest and even before I go to the bathroom. You can even put it on a tissue and have a ready-made disinfectant wipe," Duberg said in a university news release.
- **Avoid aisle seats.** Sitting in these seats increases your exposure to more people coughing and wheezing as they pass by.
- **Clean shared surfaces.** Use a disinfectant wipe to clean seat trays and armrests on planes or trains. Some germs linger up to three days on plastic surfaces.
- **Check your hotel room.** When you arrive, make sure it appears [clean](#). Use disinfectant wipes on items like the TV remote, and consider bringing your own pillow and pillowcase, because bacteria may live in the ones provided.
- **Hydrate.** Drinking plenty of water helps prevent constipation, keeps your body temperature cool and protects your heart.
- **Protect your "T-zone."** That's your eyes, nose and mouth, where germs can easily enter the body. Avoid touching them.
- **Lather up.** Perhaps most important, wash your hands after you go to the bathroom, and after you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Clean your hands thoroughly after you press the toilet handle on an airplane. It's extra germy. "I lather up with warm soapy water and rinse for about 20 seconds, which is about the amount of time it takes to remove germs and sing Happy Birthday twice," Duberg said.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [stopping the spread of germs](#).

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