

Travel Safety

With Dr. MarkAlain Déry

Clay (00:00):

Any big trips planned? You may wanna check which vaccines you need before heading out your front door or across the sea.

Diane (00:14):

Let's be honest, most people would travel all the time if they could. And you may not realize it, but many of the places we dream of visiting have diseases of their own which require the right vaccines to protect us. And believe it or not, in some areas like Australia, even have their flu season in the summer. And as wild as that sounds, we can be prepared before we travel. Dr. MarkAlain Déry of Access Health Louisiana joins us today to talk through this subject. Welcome to the show Dr. Déry.

Dr. Déry (00:47):

Thank you so much for having me this morning.

Diane (00:49):

It is our pleasure. Well, let's start off this morning with the most common travel vaccines that our listeners might need to be aware of and that we might need.

Dr. Déry (00:59):

We'll start with the one that you actually just mentioned a moment ago. Uh, Australia, of course, which is in the southern hemisphere, uh, has their influenza outbreaks, uh, in our summer. It's their winter, of course. Uh, so, uh, really the number one travel vaccine I recommend for everybody is to get a flu vaccine. Uh, after that, uh, after getting your flu vaccination, your yearly flu vaccination, it's really a function of where it is that you are traveling to to determine what the, uh, what the vaccines specifically that you're gonna need. Uh, that, so that matches your destination.

Clay (01:36):

You know, unfortunately, not every disease that we might encounter upon travel has a vaccine that will deal with it. So what are some of those that we should be aware of as we travel abroad or even just around the country?

Dr. Déry (01:50):

Right. So, um, in terms of traveling abroad, more importantly, but we are seeing more, um, as the climate changes. And I refer to it as climate changed. As we are seeing more climate change occur, we are seeing shifting pathogens around the country. Uh, just, uh, about a week ago, two weeks ago, the CDC released a really fascinating report about how a parasitic disease called babesiosis which shares, um, a, uh, a, a tick vector of, of with Lyme's disease is starting to spread into new areas, uh, particularly into New England, that's never been there before. Uh, so we are, we should be expecting new, uh, diseases to emerge as we are seeing the climate change. Even if it, it changes one or two degrees Celsius, we are going to see a shifting, um, uh, we're gonna see shifting... The, the pathogens are gonna be shifting.

Dr. Déry (02:47):

But, in, in terms of the question that you asked specifically, we are and should, uh, expect that different parts of the, uh, the world, specifically in what we refer to as the, uh, tropics, you're gonna see, uh, things like Malaria of which there is a prophylactic pill, uh, a medication that you can take for it. Uh, other diseases such as Dengue fever, which is a, um, uh, which is of course, a, a viral disease, uh, TB is very, very common in different parts of the world. Spe- specifically, uh, resource, uh, poor parts of the world, uh, we'd see TB as well.

Dr. Déry (03:24):

So, there are other diseases that one should be aware of, uh, but, uh, uh, unfortunately, at this point, really, um, uh, uh, p- a preventative measures have been really the best things to do to, uh, to prevent such diseases.

Diane (03:38):

You know, Dr. Déry, whenever someone is preparing for a trip, you're thinking about all kinds of things. For we ladies, it's what jewelry to pack and what clothes to pack. We're not necessarily thinking about, you know, keeping oneself safe, to make sure we have a flu vaccine or vaccines. How can we find out... And I know you said in different parts of the, of the world there are certain stipulations and certain vaccines, but we've got so much on our minds. We need to really remember to check about what is necessary as far as vaccinations or shots before we go abroad.

Diane (04:12):

How do we get the information that we know to make it easiest for us to understand?

Dr. Déry (04:17):

So, um, the CDC, fortunately, uh, has a, uh, a pamphlet, uh, a website, an online, uh, determination that allows you to check, uh, to see, uh, to see what the, um, uh, uh, to see what vaccinations are necessary. So if you go to [CDC.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) or e-even if you just type into a web browser, uh, CDC travel and the country you're going to. So, let's say you're going to Nigeria. If you just put in "CDC vaccines necessary, Nigeria," that will actually take you to a, uh, um, a, uh, a web page-

Diane (04:58):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (04:59):

... a landing page that will list for you, as the traveler, what are the necessary vaccines so that you can take to your healthcare provider so that they can provide those vaccines for you.

Diane (05:10):

So that's part of your checklist. Anytime you travel, you really do need to have your checklist, not only what you need to take and the medications-

Clay (05:17):

Right.

Diane (05:17):

... that you have, you know, here at home, not to forget those.

Dr. Déry (05:20):

100%.

Diane (05:20):

But also, to put that on your list to make sure that you're updated on your shots or on your vaccines.

Clay (05:27):

You know, you hear people talk about this all the time, and, and the people who are so regimented about it, (laughs) they're always like, you gotta be up to date, gotta be up to date, gotta be up-to-date on your vaccines. Are you traveling? You gotta be up to date. Why is it so important to remember when you should be checking on that and being up to date on vaccinations?

Dr. Déry (05:44):

Well, I mean, of course, it, it's like when you get into a car, what's the first thing that you do?

Clay (05:49):

Put on a seat belt.

Diane (05:50):

Correct, yeah.

Dr. Déry (05:51):

Okay. So, it should be the same thing with travel. You, you, uh, you know, you, you mentioned that, you know, people are regimented about their, their, uh, uh, perspective to vaccines. I mean, I, I, I guess I'm regimented when I get into a car (laughs).

Clay (06:04):

Yeah, uh, yeah, yeah.

Diane (06:04):

Absolutely.

Dr. Déry (06:04):

I [inaudible 00:06:07].

Diane (06:04):

Yeah, sure.

Dr. Déry (06:08):

I- the first thing I do is put on a seatbelt. So, um, I, I do a significant amount of travel. As an infectious disease physician, that's common because we respond to outbreaks around the world. And I can assure you that, uh, any vaccine or medication that's necessary to help prevent any illnesses, I take (laughs) 100%.

Diane (06:26):
Absolutely.

Dr. Déry (06:29):
To make sure because I'm there to work. Now, other people are there to travel and to be, you know, to be there for leisure. Either, whether you're working or you're there for leisure, you don't want it to be interrupted by getting a disease that could potentially be prevented.

Diane (06:44):
And especially if you could take a few steps ahead of your travel and make sure that you're protected. You just want to take that extra time to make sure that you're, as you said, you're healthy. You don't wanna be over there for business, you know, for your medical business or for just for pleasure-

Clay (07:00):
Right.

Diane (07:00):
... just to have a fun vacation.

Clay (07:02):
Right.

Diane (07:02):
And then here, you've been looking forward to this for so long, and then you get sick, and it could've been prevented. So once travelers are in their destination overseas or whatever, what else can they do, just on a routine basis, to protect themselves once they're at their destination?

Dr. Déry (07:19):
Sure. I mean, so there're, uh, a multip- uh, a multitude of things that could be done, um, depending on, uh, for example, if you're like hiking. So my family, uh, we, we go to destinations where there's a lot of walking or hiking, so you wanna make sure that, um, especially if you're in wooded areas, you wanna make sure that you're wearing long pants, long sleeves, even if it's warm outside, I never wear shorts (laughs).

Diane (07:44):
Yeah.

Dr. Déry (07:44):

That is something I-

Clay (07:46):
(laughs).

Dr. Déry (07:46):
... never wear.

Diane (07:47):
Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (07:48):
I always wear long pants that, that go bel- ben- you know, kinda below my ankle, and I always wear long sleeves, especially if we're out hiking and walking around. Bug repellent is incredibly important, especially at night. In areas where I go, uh, especially where I have to work, usually mosquitoes are very, very common. So, uh, netting, bed netting and bug repellents are very, very common, um, uh, for me, and this is something that I carry with me. Um, of course, uh, hand washing, uh, i- as much as possible is incredibly important. Avoiding any of the, uh, tap water and/or ice. Now, if you're staying in a hotel that caters toward a tourist, especially tourists that are from, uh, you know, the US or the, uh, Europe and the US, what have you, uh, usually ice water, uh, and tap water is, is okay because they have that filtered, but you should always ask.

Dr. Déry (08:42):
Some of the more rural and remote areas where I travel to, it's not. Uh, so, I m- a great pains, uh, to make sure that I, uh, avoid, uh, washing my teeth or anything along those lines-

Diane (08:53):
Oh, that's right.

Dr. Déry (08:54):
... with tap water.

Diane (08:55):
Yeah. Water.

Dr. Déry (08:56):
Avoid the ice. And then, of course, any fresh or uncooked foods, uh, need to be avoided, uh, as well. Which is a little difficult for me as a vegetarian.

Diane (09:04):
(laughs).

Dr. Déry (09:04):

But I do make, uh, an important-

Diane (09:06):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (09:07):

... point to make sure that, um, any, uh... Or I would eat at areas that I know. And I always check whether or not the, um, water's filtered. So usually at hotels that's okay. At restaurants, that may not necessarily be the case. So I tend to stay at hotels and eat at hotels where I know that the water is filtered.

Diane (09:25):

You know, Dr. Déry, uh, people that are traveling, they're excited. If they're going on a vacation or what have you. And, you know, a lot of us have not traveled out of the country since before COVID, obviously. So, you know, it's really, really important to find out what vaccines, if any, we might need before taking that long awaited trip. Again, that excitement's kicking in. This might be on the bottom of a list but is very important to have this on your checklist. So, how do we find out what vaccines we should get before going on that trip?

Dr. Déry (10:00):

Yeah, it's such a great question. Thank you so much for asking it. Um, uh, you can, g- the, the CDC does have, uh, that information readily available and if you go to [CDC.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) and even if you don't remember that URL, [CDC.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel), even if you don't remember that URL, you just need to go to a web browser and just type in CDC travel and the country destination you're going to. So let's say you're gonna go to Nigeria. CDC, I'm traveling to Nigeria, what vaccines do I need?

Diane (10:34):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (10:35):

And that will actually land you to a specific web page for the country. In this case, let's say you're going to Nigeria, and it will tell you specifically what the vaccines are. And all you need to do is bring that to your physician or healthcare provider and they'll help make sure that you get those vaccines ahead of time. Uh, probably a very, very important key point is that you should probably be thinking about this months ahead of time. So I-

Diane (10:58):

Oh, okay.

Dr. Déry (10:59):

... even though I agree, it's probably on people, the bottom of people's travel list.

Diane (11:04):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (11:05):

But it's really important that this actually gets done ahead of time because some of these vaccines need to be ordered. Um-

Diane (11:11):

Oh.

Dr. Déry (11:11):

... and also, they don't take, uh, uh, they don't take effect. In, in other words, your immune system has not produced the antibodies that are necessary, uh, for those vaccines to work, uh, uh, it takes a couple weeks for that to happen. So you really wanna make sure you're doing this months before your travel. So let's move that nes- uh, necessity for vaccination-

Diane (11:33):

Up to the top.

Dr. Déry (11:34):

... way up the list.

Diane (11:34):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (11:35):

And not keep it at the bottom of that list.

Diane (11:37):

Mm-hmm. Good point.

Clay (11:38):

What about the importance of being up to date on vaccinations and knowing where you are in the process?

Dr. Déry (11:45):

I mean, you know, being, making sure that you're up to date on all your vaccines is important. Uh, the ones that you always wanna make sure you're up to date on are, of course, influenza. Um, of course, uh, uh, tetanus vaccine is always incredibly important as well. Another important vaccine that I think we always need to be up to date with, especially here in Louisiana, is the, what's referred to as the Tdap vaccine.

Diane (12:10):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (12:11):

The Tdap, the T stands for tetanus, that's done every 10 years. It's really incredibly important that we do that. Uh, and diphtheria and pertussis. Now I know that those may sound, you know, foreign or what have you, but, uh, pertussis, uh, the P in the Tdap, is important because we have this long-standing whooping cough, uh, epidemic here in the state of Louisiana. And so, everybody needs to get that Tdap vaccine. Again, it's every 10 years, and it's important for us to get it because it does prevent whooping cough. Now, I know that a lot of the vaccines we got as kids, we don't even have to think about them ever again, and that's true, and that's great, but whooping cough is something that adults get (laughs).

Diane (12:53):

Right.

Dr. Déry (12:54):

And yes, indeed, it sounds like something that children get and they do get, but w- adults get it from children (laughs). So it is possible to get whooping cough, and so you really need to boost that, uh, that tetanus vaccine. The other ones that are the most, uh, necessary are, of course, your influenza and Tdap. Now, of course, if you're traveling, there are other vaccines that need to be updated pretty regularly. But, uh, that's really a function of the destination that you're going to.

Diane (13:22):

So, the folks who have, uh, compromised immunity. What, what advice would you give them for trying to stay, and staying healthy while they're traveling? That has to be a, just a little bit of a challenge. And, I'm sure, you know, they live with it day-to-day because they know that they have some compromised, you know, immune system, but they wanna travel too. What would you suggest?

Dr. Déry (13:45):

Of course. So, uh, vaccinations are incredibly important. Um, of course, the, uh, the, the purest advice that we said to prevent any illnesses. So, um, you know, of course it's good hand washing, making sure that you're always exposed to clean water, drinking water, uh, and then also wearing, uh, long sleeves and, and pants-

Diane (14:06):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (14:06):

... to avoid any potential mosquito bites, bed netting, uh, what have you. Uh, and then potentially masking as well. I mean, I, I, I still travel, and I mask pretty regularly as well, especially when I'm in areas of, of large groups of people.

Clay (14:19):

How far-

Dr. Déry (14:20):

And, and also to, to also, let me just also add-

Clay (14:23):

Sure.

Dr. Déry (14:23):

... and I, I don't wanna get too personal, but I do have an, uh, um, I, I'm immune compromised. And, uh, and I have a, a, an illness that makes me, uh, somewhat immunosuppressed. And so these are the things I do for myself. But these are also really good, uh, techniques to keep yourself and all other individuals healthy as well.

Diane (14:42):

So you speak from experience.

Clay (14:43):

Yeah.

Diane (14:43):

And sometimes we need that.

Clay (14:44):

Yeah.

Diane (14:44):

You know, the folks, they're, they're glad, our listeners are glad to hear that the doctor speaks from what he knows-

Clay (14:51):

Right.

Diane (14:51):

... and what he does. So many times, we just need somebody to tell us, what do you do?

Clay (14:54):

Right.

Diane (14:55):

What can you suggest?

Clay (14:56):

Mm-hmm.

Diane (14:56):

What works for you?

Clay (14:56):

Right.

Diane (14:57):

So thank you for that Dr. Déry. We appreciate it.

Clay (14:59):

Oh, I was gonna ask the doc, how far in advance should you, uh, check on vaccinations before traveling?

Dr. Déry (15:06):

I would say anywhere between three to six months is a good idea. I mean, most people who are doing travel for leisure are usually doing this three to six months ahead of time.

Diane (15:14):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (15:14):

For myself, where I travel professionally, sometimes I'm given several days' notice. So for folks like myself, I have, of course, have to be very, very up-to-date on all vaccines and all the general vaccines that are necessary for travel. Uh, but for most individuals who are doing it, uh, for, uh, for, for leisure, of course, uh, three to six months is really a good enough time. There's, and, and here in New Orleans where I'm actually, uh, there's two travel clinics. 'Cause there's several vaccines that can only be obtained at travel, what I refer to as travel clinics.

Diane (15:47):

Oh, really?

Dr. Déry (15:48):

So these are clinics that are-

Diane (15:49):

Okay.

Dr. Déry (15:49):

... that are run by infectious disease doctors who, um, specialize in the, um, in the health of the outgoing traveler and that (laughs) equally is important is the incoming traveler, the traveler or the returning traveler, uh, who may come back with a fever or may come back with rash or what have you. You know, something that may have been obtained during travel. And so, the travel clinics are great places where you'd be able to see a, uh, specialized physician, usually an infectious diseases doctor such as myself who will understand where it is that you went to. And I can assure you, I can assure you, 100% that, uh, before that, uh, physician steps into the clinic room, they've gone to that same CDC website-

Diane (16:34):
(laughs).

Dr. Déry (16:34):
(laughs).

Diane (16:35):
Right.

Dr. Déry (16:35):
... uh, and had, has looked to see what are the, uh, potential exposures that you may have had. Uh, so as, this is what they're thinking, uh, when they walk into the room to talk to you.

Clay (16:48):
You know, I wanted to throw this at you as well. We, we've talked about destinations like, uh, out, outside of the country, uh, around the country. But maybe we should spend a little time talking about the airplane that gets us there. And the fact that you're o- (laughs) you're in this thing, uh, with the recycled air that you have, and not really knowing who is sitting next to you or rows behind you. That's another good reason to make certain that you, you're not going to be compromised during travel, correct?

Dr. Déry (17:16):
Sure. I, I, I will say this, and to be, uh, to be fair to the airlines, they do h- do an excellent job of filtering that air.

Clay (17:24):
Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (17:24):
So that air is, it is recycled, but it is h- high filtered as well. But that being said, uh, it, there're many, many, many studies have shown that, um, that fir- so at first pass, so before the air is filtered, right?

Diane (17:40):
Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (17:41):
So, there are a number of studies that show people how may have influenza or tuberculosis, TB, these are two, uh, illnesses that are, uh, transmitted through the respiratory, uh, routes, or through the air. And at first pass, yes, people who are sitting, uh, behind you, coughing, sneezing, uh, could potentially-

Diane (18:00):
Yes.

Dr. Déry (18:00):

... transmit the virus, the influenza virus or the bacteria in TB, uh, but once that air is filtered, it's gone. So, it's not because, otherwise, I can assure you, (laughs) if that wasn't the case, every time we took a flight, we'd all come-

Diane (18:16):

All... yeah (laughs).

Dr. Déry (18:16):

... back sick because there's usually one or two people who are sick.

Clay (18:19):

Right.

Dr. Déry (18:19):

So the air is really, really well filtered, but at first pass, yes, you are exposed. The same thing if you take an elevator. Uh, you're going up 10 stories, right, you know, and somebody's coughing or sneezing, you're in a very, very close space, so there's a very high likelihood that you could potentially be exposed there as well.

Clay (18:36):

I've never seen someo- (laughs) I've never seen a room clear faster than-

Diane (18:40):

Mm-hmm.

Clay (18:41):

... an elevator when someone coughs.

Diane (18:42):

Absolutely.

Clay (18:42):

(laughs).

Diane (18:43):

And especially since COVID, everybody's-

Clay (18:45):

Yeah.

Diane (18:45):

... so hyper-aware, Dr. Déry, of coughing and sneezing.

Clay (18:48):

Right.

Diane (18:49):

And it seems like I'm always around the child that is sick and that's crying and sneezing and, and what have you, but that does make you feel better, you know, our listeners feel better knowing that. And just having the doctor say that about the air on the airplane, so-

Clay (19:02):

Actually, that's very good-

Diane (19:03):

Yeah. Thank you.

Clay (19:04):

... very well explained.

Diane (19:05):

Uh, yeah.

Clay (19:05):

I'm sure you, you gave someone some relief, uh, as, (laughs) as Diane raises her hand.

Diane (19:11):

Yeah, thank you. Yeah.

Clay (19:12):

You've given people relief-

Diane (19:12):

Geeze.

Clay (19:12):

... based upon that explanation.

Diane (19:14):

Boy, no kidding.

Dr. Déry (19:15):

Great. Good.

Diane (19:16):

Now, there are some places, Dr. Déry, from what we understand, that do require, or are there some places, I guess I should, you know, say that, say it in that respect, that do require certain vaccinations or are they just recommended before you travel? What, what are your thoughts on that?

Dr. Déry (19:35):

So, so that's a gr- yeah, a great question. So th- the answer is yes to both.

Diane (19:40):

Okay.

Dr. Déry (19:41):

Um, so le- let's focus on, uh, a country such as in West Africa all require Yellow Fever vaccine. That's 100%. You will not enter the country without proof of vaccination. They do not j- they will literally hold you at the gate and put you back on a plane back to wherever it is you came from, uh, without a Yellow Fever vaccine. Now, the Yellow Fever vaccine can only be obtained at travel clinics. So you can't go to a pharmacy to get it, or go to your doctors or your healthcare provider's office to get it. It can only be obtained, uh, in a, uh, traveler's clinic. This is a great reason why you need to plan this three to six months ahead of time, because, uh, of the necessity for that vaccine is so important.

Dr. Déry (20:28):

So those are, so there's another reason why you should go to that CDC website, again-

Diane (20:32):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (20:33):

CDC.gov/travel, uh, and then if you just put in, or if you don't remember that, you just need to put in CDC, um, uh, what vaccines do I need to travel to, and let's say, again, we're gonna use the country in West Africa, Nigeria, let's say. Uh, and then you will, uh, see what vaccines are necessary. And again, that vaccine is only obtained at travel clinics. So if you are going to some of these countries that require Yellow Fever vaccination, you need, definitely need to plan way in advance for it.

Diane (21:03):

Wh- how do we find a travel clinic? This is the first-

Dr. Déry (21:05):

Y-

Diane (21:05):

... I've ever heard of something like that. You know, usually you just go to your, your family doctor, your, and just say, you know, I'm going here, I'm going there. I need a vaccine or shot or... I've never heard of having a specific travel clinic. How do we find those, Dr. Déry?

Dr. Déry (21:21):

Th- th- those are usually found, uh, thankfully through the internet. So, if you just-

Diane (21:25):

Okay.

Dr. Déry (21:26):

... go to your web browser and then let's say you're Baton Rouge-

Diane (21:29):

Right.

Dr. Déry (21:29):

... or Shreveport or Alexandria-

Diane (21:31):

Right, somewhere in the state, yeah.

Dr. Déry (21:32):

... that near, near, nearest travel clinic near me. Usually, these are run out of University, uh, Health Centers-

Diane (21:39):

Oh.

Dr. Déry (21:40):

... uh, that have access to infectious disease doctors. So, for example, when I was, um, when I was at Tulane, Tulane, uh, I was adjacent to that travel clinic as well. Uh, I think Ochsner has one as well. So you're, you're never far away-

Diane (21:53):

Okay.

Dr. Déry (21:53):

... and, uh, these are clinics that most healthcare systems will have, uh, so as to accommodate the traveler.

Diane (22:01):

Okay. Excellent information. I was not aware of it. That's great news. Well, what about, you know, of course, about, you know, the COVID-19 vaccination. Um, uh, d- do countries, specific countries require proof of vaccinations? Or do they require negative COVID test? How does that... I suppose, again, you could go back to the country that you're going to?

Dr. Déry (22:23):

(laughs) That, that's a good question. I, I don't think there's, at this point, I mean, I know here in the US, and I am almost positive it's the globe, but I'll just stick with the statistic here in the US.

Diane (22:35):

Okay.

Dr. Déry (22:35):

Um, but 95% of us have antibodies for COVID.

Diane (22:39):

Yay (laughs).

Dr. Déry (22:39):

So-

Diane (22:39):

Hallelujah.

Dr. Déry (22:39):

... the notion... Yeah.

Diane (22:39):

Geeze.

Dr. Déry (22:43):

But the, the, the notion of, you know, when you said COVID-19, I hadn't thought about the 19 in a long time-

Diane (22:49):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (22:49):

... I'm like, oh, yeah, there's been-

Diane (22:50):

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Déry (22:50):

... four years.

Diane (22:50):

Oh, gosh.

Dr. Déry (22:50):
(laughs).

Diane (22:53):
It was out of our lives. We'll never get back again. Geeze.

Dr. Déry (22:58):
We've been thinking about it.

Diane (22:58):
Yeah.

Dr. Déry (22:59):
Um, uh, COVID-19. I hadn't thought about that. But, uh, uh, and of course, I'm an infectious disease doctor. I deal with COVID regularly (laughs)-

Diane (23:04):
Yeah.

Dr. Déry (23:05):
... as a, as a physician. Uh, but thankfully, all of us actually have, uh, antibodies. So 95%. It's pretty much 100% have antibodies. And the, and the 5% of people who are unable to mount antibodies, so for those folks that are, you know, s- very, very immunosuppressed, being a-as a result of Leukemia-

Diane (23:25):
Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (23:29):
... as a result of Leukemia and other immunosuppressant diseases, uh, so really the rest of us have antibodies, uh, for COVID as a result of either vaccination or infection or really, most cases, both. Uh, and those people who have both vaccination and, uh, uh, natural immunity, in other words, those people who've had COVID and mounted antibodies, just due to the fact that they had COVID, uh, those, those individuals with that mixed immunity-

Diane (23:59):
Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (23:59):
... have the highest rates of, uh-

Diane (24:01):

Really?

Dr. Déry (24:01):

... of ability to, uh, uh, fend off, uh, COVID in the future. So, while, of course, gone are the days where we have to... I was actually just thinking about it just yesterday, about how, um, I think I was in Portugal for a meeting, for an HIV meeting, um, that we were required to attend, um, and Portugal at that time had the highest rates of vaccination in the world. So that's why the meeting was held in, uh, uh, in Portugal.

Diane (24:26):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (24:26):

But I remember having to go online and do an online, uh, COVID test to come back to the US. So it was, uh, I had to do it via, like, FaceTime. My phone was propped in my hotel room against, you know, a lamp, and I was showing them my-

Diane (24:41):

(laughs).

Dr. Déry (24:41):

... how I went through and swabbed my nose, put it in the reagent, had to like, uh, put the test result up against the phone so they could see the negative result.

Diane (24:51):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (24:51):

They, uh, sent me within two minutes an email, uh, saying that I was COVID free and that was how I was able to get back to-

Diane (24:56):

Yay.

Dr. Déry (24:56):

... the US.

Diane (24:56):

Good to get back home.

Dr. Déry (24:56):

I think those days are-

Diane (24:56):

Yeah (laughs).

Dr. Déry (24:56):

(laughs) Right. I think those days are over.

Diane (25:03):

That's the best news t- That's the best news we've had about COVID in a very long time.

Dr. Déry (25:04):

Right. The-

Diane (25:04):

So, thank you for that. That's refreshing.

Dr. Déry (25:07):

100% (laughs).

Clay (25:09):

Uh, uh, uh, besides location, are there any other factors that impact or affect which vaccines we ought to get?

Dr. Déry (25:19):

Location is really the most important thing. I mean, I think that everybody should probably be up to date on their influenza vaccine, their Tetanus or Tdap vaccine which we mentioned, uh, a moment ago.

Diane (25:31):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (25:32):

And Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccines. Those are all your basic vaccines. After that, it's a function of where it is that you're going. So, for example, if you're going to countries that where malaria is prevalent, right, there, there is no va- there is a vaccine for malaria that was recently just released, but that's really not meant for, you know, for the traveler. That's really meant for folks that live in endemic areas where malaria is right now. It'll probably, if it's being shown to be effective, it'll likely, uh, c- uh, be available for travelers, but that's a ways away.

Dr. Déry (26:04):

Really, the best way to prevent malaria is, uh, with a daily medication called Malarone. And wherever I travel, you know, and again, sometimes we're given several days' notice, as soon as I hang up the phone, and I'm being sent somewhere, the first thing I'm doing as I'm hanging up the phone, I'm on my way to the pharmacy to pick up a new prescription for Malarone.

Diane (26:23):

Right.

Dr. Déry (26:24):

That is single-han- and I had malaria. I had the worst kind of malaria, called falciparum malaria when I was in the, uh, jungles of, uh, in Burma or, um, in those days it was called Burma, uh, now we refer to as Myanmar. And it was, I was on the border between Thailand and Burma-

Diane (26:40):

Gee.

Dr. Déry (26:41):

... and, uh, had falciparum malaria. Those are 10 days of my life (laughs) that are gone. They put me in a sick hut and, uh, they like wished me well.

Diane (26:49):

(laughs).

Dr. Déry (26:49):

I woke up 10 days later.

Diane (26:52):

Oh.

Clay (26:52):

Yikes.

Diane (26:52):

That's encouraging, geeze.

Dr. Déry (26:52):

And, and (laughs).

Diane (26:52):

Man.

Dr. Déry (26:54):

And those days, doxycycline was considered the, uh, uh, preventative medication. It's no longer. And, and, and in those days, it was actually kinda interesting. In those days, um, the p- it was, there was no, of course, there was no internet in these days. And so the CDC, uh, would release a published book about what... Every year they would released a published book about what vaccinations. And in that interim year, the, uh, parasite, the, uh, um, um, the malaria parasite had become resistant to doxycycline. And so-

Diane (27:26):

Oh, geeze.

Dr. Déry (27:27):

... I ended up being, uh, uh, effected, even though I was taking the right prophylactic medication for it. But Malarone is the one that, one that, that most people take. It's a daily medication. You start taking it when you start traveling, and then when you come back, you take it for seven days extra as well. Uh, but, uh, I- these are the sorts of things that either, um, that, that a travel clinic, especially if you're going to areas that we refer to as the tropics or what have you, these are really important, uh, things that you need to do to keep yourself safe, uh, so that this way you don't return, uh, with any illness.

Diane (28:02):

And you're not in a sick hut for 10 (laughs) days. My gosh.

Dr. Déry (28:05):

Or you're not in a sick hut in the jungle-

Diane (28:06):

Geeze.

Dr. Déry (28:06):

... of, uh, Myanmar (laughs).

Diane (28:08):

Yikes. You know, I'm just curious. There are probably some moms listening today or some dads and they're thinking about taking the family on a vacation. Um, what if a child happens to be too young to have the vaccinations that are recommended for travel? What, what do you suggest they-

Dr. Déry (28:26):

I'd recommend not going.

Diane (28:28):

Oh, okay. Just case closed?

Dr. Déry (28:30):

I'd recommend not going. Case closed (laughs).

Diane (28:31):

Okay. Okay.

Clay (28:31):

(laughs).

Dr. Déry (28:32):

If a child is too young, I mean, really, that's, you know, uh, you know, it's like putting your child in a car without putting them in the, in the child seat.

Diane (28:42):

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Déry (28:43):

You know? Like, you wouldn't do that, right? You would just be like, well, I'm, I'm, I'm not getting in that car if I can't (laughs) keep my child safe.

Diane (28:50):

Right.

Dr. Déry (28:50):

I would strong-

Diane (28:50):

Okay.

Dr. Déry (28:50):

... I, I would strongly recommend that if your child can't be vaccinated, uh, uh, bec- and I'm not, and I can't think of a vaccine, uh, but I, I, I'm not looking at a list right now and I, and, and-

Diane (29:01):

Right.

Dr. Déry (29:01):

... and I haven't done travel medicine in a while so, w- with all due respect, I, I don't know 100%. I can't think of a vaccine. I think that was more of our COVID mindset-

Diane (29:11):

Oh, okay.

Dr. Déry (29:11):

... that children couldn't take vaccines 'cause of COVID.

Diane (29:13):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (29:15):

But, but, but that being said, if you're unable to protect your child, don't go.

Diane (29:20):

Case closed. That's simple. Simple as that. Thank you for that.

Clay (29:22):

That's it. That's it. Suck it up, Junior.

Diane (29:23):

Yeah, it says it all (laughs).

Clay (29:23):

You can't go on the safari with us.

Diane (29:25):

(laughs).

Clay (29:25):

Maybe in six years.

Diane (29:27):

Or when you're 18.

Dr. Déry (29:28):

100%.

Diane (29:28):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (29:28):

Hundred. You wouldn't put your child in car-

Diane (29:32):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (29:32):

... if they didn't have a child seat.

Diane (29:33):

100%.

Dr. Déry (29:33):

You wouldn't.

Clay (29:34):

That's right.

Diane (29:35):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (29:36):

Yes.

Clay (29:36):

That's right.

Diane (29:37):

Yeah.

Clay (29:37):

Uh, it, it's interesting, uh, do you have any other advice for people to help them stay healthy while traveling? You know, this is, as, as we move and you referenced it earlier, as we move further and further away from 2019, more, more normalcy is setting in, and tha- a big part of that is travel. Uh, this summer, everybody's gonna be moving around again even more. So what advice would you give us as the numbers increase?

Dr. Déry (30:00):

Right. I mean, so we're going back to kind of like, it's, you know, kinda summarize all the key point (laughs) here.

Diane (30:06):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (30:06):

Uh, is make sure that you have checked, uh, the CDC websites to make sure they, all the vaccines that you can take, uh, you do take. Uh, of course, make sure that, uh, if it's areas where there's mosquitoes that you bring bed netting and bug repellent. That's incredibly important, uh, that you do that because really, mosquitoes feed at night. So when you're sleeping, you're unaware that they're actually feeding on you, biting you. And when I mean feeding, they're biting you. Uh, that's incredibly important. A bed netting. The simple... It's like a seatbelt.

Diane (30:37):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (30:37):

The simplest thing in the world, but can prevent so much issues. Uh, of course, making sure that you, uh, are eating in areas where there's, uh, um, filtered water. Now, most folks are gonna probably go with guidebooks or what have you. Um, stick to those (laughs) guidebooks. It's to areas-

Diane (30:55):

Right.

Dr. Déry (30:55):

... recommendations where to eat, uh, s- and avoiding street vendors is incredibly important. Those individuals that are very, uh, adventurous travelers that eat off the streets-

Diane (31:06):

Mm.

Dr. Déry (31:06):

... uh, you know, with vendors or what have you, those are individuals that, uh, potentially could be exposing themselves as well, uh, to, uh, uh, food-borne illnesses. So these are things that really need to be avoided, um, uh, so as, so that you don't end up with any sort of diarrheal like diseases while you're on the road.

Diane (31:25):

So you're talking about common sense. That's what you're talking about.

Clay (31:27):

(laughs).

Diane (31:28):

Common sense. And if it doesn't look right, or smell right, or feel right, you know, listen to, you know, just listen to that little voice inside you, stay away from it, don't do it. You're talking about street vendors; I call that community food. Stay away from community food that you don't know where it came from. So, Dr. Déry, as we're kind of wrapping up our podcast today, is there anything that you can think of that we have not addressed or you would like to talk about, uh, before we end today? Clay, is there anything else that-

Clay (31:57):

Oh, I think-

Diane (31:57):

... we need to add or?

Clay (31:58):

... it's been extremely thorough about everything.

Diane (32:00):

Yeah.

Dr. Déry (32:00):

No, I, I think we got, we got everything, you know, uh, again. And I, and I, I like what you said, common sense, really. It's-

Diane (32:06):

Mm-hmm.

Dr. Déry (32:07):

... it's really important. Don't, don't be adventurous when you're traveling. If you are going to be adventurous, you think you're gonna be bucking the rules, I can almost-

Diane (32:15):

Oh.

Dr. Déry (32:15):

... assure you, you'll come home with a, uh, with a, with a, with a bug that you picked up, a pathogen that you picked up while traveling. You don't wanna do that. And, and also, let me also say, for some of our travelers that are single. Um, and this is important as well. Uh, of course, the use of, uh, barrier protection is incredibly important because those are parts of the world where, uh, obviously, um, uh, STIs are, are, can be prevalent. So, if you are engaging, uh, it's important that you use barrier protection at all times. And that's probably one of the points that we didn't talk about, but I think it's an important point.

Clay (32:52):

Well, we appreciate it, Doc. It's been fantastic. A lot of information about vaccination and, and as we referenced earlier, more people are gonna be traveling and we want everyone to be safe. So definitely take advantage of that website, uh, [CDC.gov/travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) to learn what you need to know about it. Doctor, thank you so much for spending some time talking with us. And we have enjoyed this latest episode of Vax Matter.