

London Olympics

Opening credits: Song: Lipstick; Album: Mad Men Original TV Soundtrack; Artist: David Carbonara; Label: Manhattan Records.

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(Elevator music, elevator doors opening and closing, “ding” of the bell as an elevator stops of floors)

[Brad Myers] Hi, I’m Brad Myers, and this is “CDC Elevator Chat,” the program where *we* ask the questions *you* would if you ever found yourself on an elevator with a CDC scientist.

(Elevator music, doors, bells)

With me today is Kelly Holton from CDC’s Travelers’ Health Branch. Welcome Kelly; thanks for joining us.

[Kelly Holton] Thanks for the invitation. I actually thought we were going to tape this in an elevator?

[Brad Myers] No, but if you want we can look at the floor during the entire interview if that’ll help.

(Elevator doors closing)

So, tell me about your work on the London Olympics.

[Kelly Holton] The Olympics presents a unique situation for travelers, so we’re reaching out to them and their doctors to help with preparations for the trip.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] So, what makes this such a unique traveling situation?

[Kelly Holton] Well, England is similar to the United States in many respects.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Churchill did say we were two nations separated by a common language.

[Kelly Holton] Right, but travelers should be aware of some differences. For example, diseases like measles are more common in England than in the United States. In 2011, a lot of US travelers who visited Europe became infected with measles.

Driving and traffic are also different in England. In the United States, traffic flows to the right, but in England it flows to the left. This means travelers need to be *especially* careful when crossing the street.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Then the advice for crossing the street is reversed, right?

[Kelly Holton] In London, visitors need to look right, left, then right again. Another difference is that getting help requires calling 999, not 911, so travelers should program the 999 emergency number into their phones.

[Brad Myers] Somebody needs to tell Siri that.

What are some things travelers need to do before leaving for London?

[Kelly Holton] People traveling to the Olympics should be sure they're up-to-date on routine vaccines, especially measles. If they aren't 100 percent sure, they need to see a health care provider before the trip.

Travelers also need to check their health insurance to see if it covers them overseas. If not, they should consider purchasing travel medical insurance.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Okay. So, once you're across the pond, then what?

[Kelly Holton] Travelers to London should know that the crowds at the Olympics can be extraordinarily large, so they'll be in really close contact with a lot of people. To help prevent the spread of germs, it's *especially* important to practice basic hygiene. They need to wash their hands frequently, or use a hand sanitizer, and cough and sneeze into a tissue or their sleeve, not their hand. It's also important to know where the emergency exits are in unfamiliar places.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Other advice is that French fries are called chips, chips are called crisps, and European restaurants are pretty stingy on ice cubes, so start getting used to room temperature iced tea now.

(Elevator doors, bells)

Kelly, where can travelers go for more information about staying safe and healthy when travelling to the London Olympics?

[Kelly Holton] We have a lot more information on the CDC Travelers' Health website at www.cdc.gov/travel.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Finally, we ask two standard questions of all of our passengers. First, why did you get into public health?

[Kelly Holton] Well, I actually studied English and worked at a few newspapers before finding my way into public health, but I was lucky enough to end up at CDC. I love working in Travelers' Health because for many people, a trip overseas is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Our branch works to make sure that these travelers stay healthy and safe and have nothing but great memories from their trip. That's a really important and meaningful goal for me.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Second, what will you be talking about this week with your colleagues over lunch?

[Kelly Holton] We'll probably be talking about the cool British terms we're learning from working on the London Olympics health and safety information. We created a glossary which is available on the CDC website.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Got time for a shameless plug?

[Kelly Holton] Sure! Visit our website before any trip overseas. If you missed my earlier shameless plug, the address is www.cdc.gov/travel.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Brad Myers] Kelly Holton, Communication and Education Team Lead for CDC's Traveler's Health Branch, thanks for riding with us.

If you want to find out more about health and safety when travelling to the London Olympics, or other stuff from CDC to gobsmack your English hosts, go to www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

See you next time, or as they say in the UK, Cheers.

(Elevator doors, bells)

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Closing credits: Song: London Calling; Artist: The Clash; Album: London Calling; Label: Epic Records.