

# HOMESAFETYMATTERS

WINTER 2024-25

## HEALTHY AIR TRAVEL

### How to get from here to there without getting sick from the flight

Traveling can be a big process, especially when you're flying. Below are some tips from [familydoctor.org](http://familydoctor.org) on how to make your air travel healthier and happier.

#### Before your flight

Check travel advisories and restrictions. This will warn you of any disease outbreaks or extra safety precautions you should take. In some instances, these reports may notify you to reconsider or cancel your travel plans.

You may want to wear a facial mask in the airport and on the plane. If you are or think you may be sick, it is best to see your doctor beforehand or avoid flying. You do not want to spread germs knowingly or arrive at your destination and feel worse.

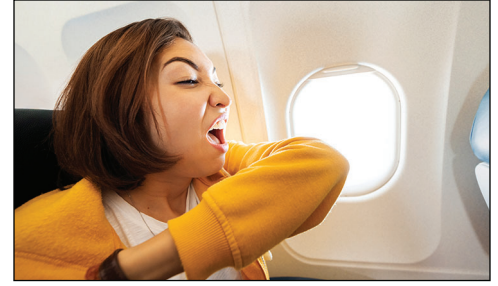
Travel with an empty water bottle that you can fill at purified water stations in many airports so you can stay hydrated. Pack healthy snacks, like fresh or dried fruit, veggies, trail mix, or granola bars. Pack enough medicine in your carry-on

bag to last your whole trip. It also is smart to take extra medicine with you in case your return trip gets delayed. Remember to bring along the names and dosages of all your medicines. You should plan to get a flu shot and consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine. These can boost your immune system and help prevent illness on the plane and at your destination.

#### On your flight

Use a disinfectant wipe to clean anything you may come into contact with. If you need to adjust your overhead light or air vent, use hand sanitizer afterward. If you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with your elbow to prevent spreading any germs.

The air pressure in the plane is strongest during takeoff and landing. Some people find that chewing gum helps to ease pressure on your ears. You also can wear earplugs or drink water. If you are traveling with an infant, try feeding them or using a pacifier to promote swallowing and help release pressure.



*According to the American Lung Association, a cough can travel at 50 mph and expel almost 3,000 droplets. Sneezes win though: They can travel up to 100 mph and create upwards of 100,000 droplets.*

Certain people are at higher risk of getting blood clots, or deep vein thrombosis. Talk to your doctor about the symptoms of DVT and the precautions you should take. Suggestions often include wearing loose, comfortable clothing as well as compression socks. Get up once an hour to walk or relax your muscles if you can. If that is not an option, you can engage your muscles while seated. Tap your feet, flex your ankles, stretch your calf muscles, and try not to cross your legs. Ask your doctor if you should take aspirin or an anticoagulant (blood thinner) before you fly.

## FOOD SAFETY TIPS

### Food-borne illness a risk

- Wash your hands with hot water and antibacterial soap before preparing food.
- Keep meat separate from other groceries when purchasing, storing, and preparing.
- Cook raw eggs, dairy and meat to appropriate temperatures before eating.
- Store leftovers in the fridge or freezer within two hours of preparing.
- Rinse produce before eating or cooking.
- Disinfect the lids on packaged goods before opening. Canned food may hoard bacteria from its time in transit and storage.

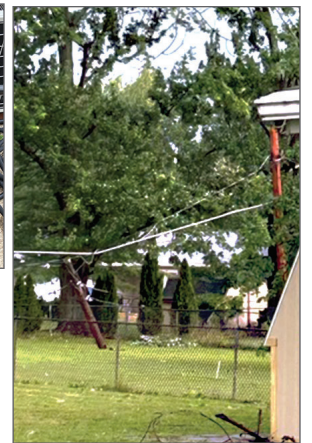


## LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR, RLG IN NE OHIO IS THERE

### Regional office helps associates out with generators after strong storms

When three tornados touched down near North Ridgeville, Ohio, in late summer, many of our associates were left without power, some for over a week.

The Northeast Ohio warehouse sprung into action, loaning 14 of its generators and hundreds of feet of electrical extension cords to grateful associates who were able to keep critical appliances such as necessary medical devices and refrigerators running. That no doubt saved each family a lot of money in groceries that would have spoiled.



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## SNOW DAY! HOW TO STAY SAFE WHILE SLEDDING

### Cleveland Clinic ER doctor shares tips for being careful while having fun

Sledding can be a lot of fun, but it also comes with plenty of risks. A 2021 study of sledding-related injuries showed that kids account for nearly 70% of sledding injuries, including fractures and concussions. In children and adults alike, the majority of injuries — as many as half — happen in collisions.

But that doesn't mean you have to skip this wintry activity. Cleveland Clinic emergency medicine physician Baruch Fertel shares tips for safe sledding so you can enjoy your snow day and head home warm and well when you're done.

#### Be aware of weather conditions

The best time for sledding is right after a heavy, wet snowfall when the temperature is about 30 degrees. Don't go out in sub-zero temperatures, and avoid icy hills. Also avoid sledding at night, when visibility is low and you might not be able to see obstacles in your way.

#### Practice safe sledding

##### 1. Choose a safe area

Scope out potential sled hills and pick one that's free of trees and other potential dangers. This includes making sure there's ample room at the bottom to glide to a complete stop. Nix any hill that

slides toward traffic, into a parking lot, near a body of water or toward anything other than a smooth, clear landing.

##### 2. Bundle up and stay dry

Suit up in waterproof gear intended for snow sports, and remove wet clothing as soon as you get home.

##### 3. Consider a helmet

Kids are more likely than adults to sustain head injuries while sledding, likely because they don't have the skills to control their sleds as well.

##### 4. Observe sledding etiquette

To minimize your risk, choose a hill where your fellow sledders are observing the unwritten rules of the road. "It should be obvious where you sled down on one side of the hill and come back up on the other side," Dr. Fertel says.

##### 5. Use a real sled — and use it as it's intended

Studies show that sledders who use snow tubes and disks or saucers are more likely to sustain concussions than those who use sleds and toboggans. "The best type of sled is the kind with a steering mechanism and a brake," Dr. Fertel explains, "and you want to be sure to use it the way the manufacturer says." This



Kids should go down the hill feet first for safety. Teach children how to bail off the sled if they are going too fast or in danger of hitting something.

means not loading multiple people onto a sled intended for one.

##### 6. Skip ramps and tricks

It can be tempting to build snow ramps (or to be the cool adult who sleds off the ramp that kids have made), but leave the stunts to the professionals.

##### 7. Go down feet-first

Instead of sliding down headfirst, stick to feet-first sledding, for safety's sake. "You have more control over the sled, and there's less risk of a head injury if you do crash," Dr. Fertel says.

##### 8. Learn proper crash protocol

A face full of powder is preferable to a broken bone, so teach kids to bail off of their sled if it's moving too fast, or if it's headed for an obstacle like a tree or another person. It's much safer to bail than brace for a crash.

## SQUIRRELS IN YOUR HOUSE CAN MAKE YOU NUTS

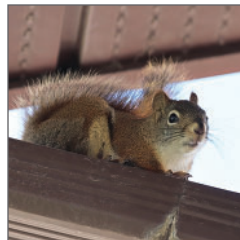
### Damage, risk of rabies means they will need to be evicted

Squirrels can chew through shingles, aluminum and wood siding, which can provide access to a home's attic. They can climb into chimneys to nest. In some cases, they may get stuck, forcing them to find an alternate route out.

Squirrels can cause considerable damage and pose a health risk to your family if they get inside your home so it's important to address the issue as soon as possible. Here are a few methods to help squirrels find their way out:

**Make noise:** If you suspect a squirrel is in your attic or chimney, making loud noises may help scare the squirrel toward the exit, says the Humane Society.

**Use vinegar:** Try soaking rags with cider vinegar and placing them near the attic door or at the bottom of the fireplace. Squirrels do not like the smell of vinegar and may choose to leave on their own.



**Aid the squirrel in finding the exit:** If a squirrel is on the loose inside a room of your home, it may be best to let it try to find the exit itself. Open windows or doors in the room that lead outside, and then block interior access points to that room. Remember to stay away from the squirrel and call a pest control specialist if it does not find its way out.

## AIR YOU CAN CARRY

### Keep tires properly inflated with device that fits in the glove box

No one wants to see the "check tire" icon light on the dash, especially in the winter. Driving on underinflated tires is dangerous. You need to find a gas station with an air pump and hope it is working.



But small, portable devices are available that take some of the hassle out of filling an underinflated tire. They can be stored in the glove box so you have air when you need it. Most run between \$40 - \$65, and can be charged via the car's 12-volt DC power outlet. You just pull over to a safe spot, attach the hose, set the correct pressure, push a button and soon you are back on the road. Some models even have lights to help you see.