



Travel Advice Leaflet

This leaflet is designed to remind you of some of the hazards that you might face on your holiday – and how to prevent them.

Further more specific information can be obtained on request from your travel nurse

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

This is the most common illness you are at risk of during your travel abroad yet it can be prevented by following a few simple measures:

- Unless you are sure that the local water is safe to drink, drink only bottled water (check that the seal is intact before buying). If bottled water is unavailable use previously boiled and cooled water or water purification tablets.
- Avoid ice in drinks and use 'safe' water (as above) for cleaning teeth
- Avoid eating unpasteurised dairy products e.g.: milk, cheese, ice cream. Wrapped ice creams from reputable suppliers are safer than 'tubs' of ice creams, as in those used for cornets
- Meat should be thoroughly cooked and eaten hot. Avoid leftovers
- Be wary of 'buffets' where food has been lying around for some time.
- Be wary of fish and shellfish – take local advice and avoid if any doubt
- Avoid green salads if there is a chance they have been washed in local 'unsafe' water.
- All fruit should be peeled before eating and the peel discarded
- Vegetables should be well cooked
- Be wary of buying food from street vendors
- Maintain good personal hygiene – wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating or handling food and after going to the toilet
- Use anti bacterial hand wipes where there are inadequate washing facilities



If you are unlucky enough to contract travellers' diarrhoea drink plenty of 'safe' water to maintain rehydration. This is very important as dehydration from the diarrhoea can be very serious. Diluted fruit juices or cans of fizzy drinks can be used if water is not available. Over the counter anti diarrhoeal medicines brought from home can be taken to relieve symptoms. If symptoms persist seek medical advice. Women taking the contraceptive pill will need to use extra precautions if they develop diarrhoea – refer to your own pill packet instructions.

ALCOHOL

'Alcohol and drugs increase bravado but reduce competence'

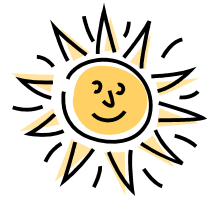


- Know your limitations
- Avoid drinking alcohol before swimming, boating or any other water activities
- Be aware of local laws and customs as alcohol is not legal in some countries and the age limit for buying alcohol is not always the same as in the UK

SUN

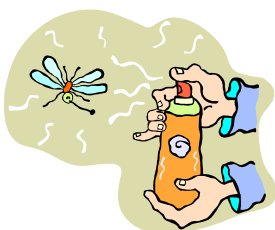
Sunburn and heatstroke are to be avoided if you want to enjoy your holiday. Also radiation from the sun is known to cause skin cancers. We are all vulnerable but some groups of people are more so:

- Babies and children
- People with fair skin
- Those with previous skin cancers



Be safe in the sun

- Use high factor sun creams on all exposed areas of skin whenever outside, whether the sun is shining or not. Reapply often, particularly after swimming and other water sports. Be wary of cheap sunscreens bought abroad, they might not give adequate protection.
- Wear a wide brimmed hat, long sleeves and sunglasses
- Avoid being in the direct sun from 11am – 3 pm, when the sun is strongest
- Drink extra non alcoholic fluids to prevent dehydration (alcohol can dehydrate you thereby making matters worse)



MOSQUITO BITES

Certain types of mosquitoes, ticks, sand flies and other insects can cause diseases such as malaria, yellow fever and dengue fever and

others. Some of these bite at night, others during the day. You should avoid being bitten

- Cover up exposed skin as much as possible particularly dusk until dawn: long sleeved shirts, long trousers.
- Use a good mosquito repellent (containing DEET) on all exposed areas of skin. If using with sunscreen, apply on top of the sunscreen.
- If room is not air conditioned but is screened; keep the shutters closed and use insecticidal room sprays
- Avoid camping near areas of stagnant water as these are ideal mosquito breeding grounds
- If camping or sleeping in unscreened or non air conditioned accommodation sleep under an insecticide impregnated bed net
- If you are going to a malarious area the travel nurse will give you a more comprehensive leaflet on bite avoidance

ANIMAL BITES



Rabies is present in several areas of the world and there is no treatment for it.

- Do not touch any animal, however cute. They do not have to bite you to transmit rabies, it can be transmitted via their saliva on your broken skin
- If you are bitten or licked by a potentially rabid animal immediately wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. The wound can then be cleansed with iodine solution or alcohol. Then seek urgent medical help within 24 hours, even if you have been vaccinated against rabies

SWIMMING

If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean avoid swimming or paddling in fresh water lakes or streams. An unpleasant parasitic disease called Bilharzia can be caught from such bodies of water. Wear footwear when on beaches, rather than going barefoot, to avoid sand fly bites and other diseases.

- Alcohol and water should not be mixed (except in a glass)!
- Do not swim alone and swim only in approved places
- Do not swim after a big meal



ACCIDENTS

Safety standards abroad are not always as good as at home. Pleasure boats are often overcrowded and don't have enough safety equipment for all the passengers. Operators are often not adequately trained. Hire cars may not be maintained to our high standards, other drivers may not be as careful as we are. In some countries they drive on a different side of the road to us and have different rules of the road. Be aware of this and take care. There are muggers and thieves across the world, be aware of where it is and isn't safe to be.

THE JOURNEY

There have been reports of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and deaths from pulmonary embolus as a result of air flights. However the problem has also been seen after prolonged periods of immobility during other forms of travel such as coach, car or train journeys. To prevent this



- Exercise your legs whenever possible. Get up and move around the plane or coach and have frequent stops if travelling by car.
- Maintain hydration with plenty of fluids but limit alcohol and caffeine consumption (tea, coffee).

BLOOD BORNE INFECTIONS

If travelling to a developing country consider taking a sterile medical kit with syringes, needles etc

- Avoid having a blood transfusion in a developing country unless essential
- Avoid having body piercing, tattoos or acupuncture abroad as hepatitis can be transmitted via non sterile equipment



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

The use of alcohol and recreational drugs can lead the traveller into risky behaviour. The unprepared traveller may end up taking risks that they wouldn't normally take at home.

- Avoid casual sexual relationships where possible, particularly with commercial sex workers
- Buy condoms from a reputable source only – preferably in the UK before you leave. Those brought abroad are not always reliable

TRAVEL INSURANCE

- Make sure that you have good travel insurance that will cover you for medical repatriation – dead or alive. Without it the bill could run into 6 figures
- Check that it covers you for all your planned activities. For example most policies will cover scuba diving to a depth of 30 metres only, skiing – not off piste, etc

More specialist travel advice such as travelling at altitude, travelling with diabetes, latest advice and country information can be found on the following websites, or ask the travel nurse for further information.

www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk	Provided by the NHS Scotland for people travelling abroad
www.nathnac.org	Protecting the health of British travellers
www.doh.gov.uk	For information on and for an application form for the European Health Insurance card
www.masta-travel-health.com	Medical Advice for Travellers Abroad
www.gogapyear.com	Essential advice for gap year travellers
www.fco.gov.uk	Advice on travelling and living abroad and what to do if things go wrong
www.nomad.travel.co.uk	Online store for travel clothing and equipment
www.travelmed.com	Travel health information and online shop for travel products
www.lonelyplanet.com	Travel guides, information and advice
www.ismmed.org	The International society of mountain medicine
www.medex.org	Travelling at altitude
www.diabetes.org.uk	Diabetes UK advice for travellers with diabetes
www.istm.org	International society of travel medicine, for a list of travel clinics worldwide

ENJOY YOUR TRIP

