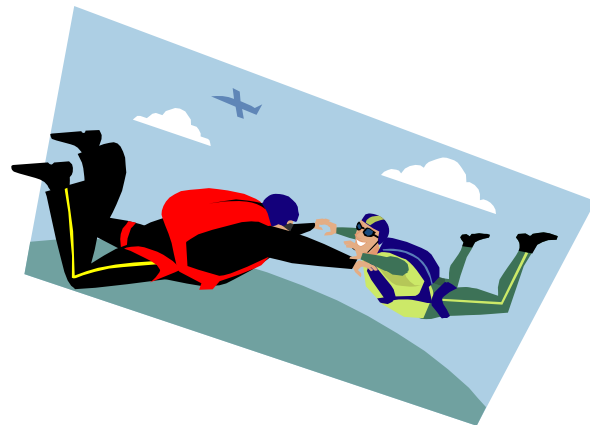




GOING TRAVELLING?

ENJOY YOURSELF. HAVE FUN. BE CAREFUL.



ALCOHOL

Inhibitions are lowered, we take more risks, and we behave in ways that we might not normally behave without the alcohol. Many people enjoy it but must be aware of the risks of excess. The legal age for buying and drinking alcohol is different in some countries. In other countries there is no alcohol at all and it is illegal to drink it!

ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Road traffic accidents are the leading cause of death in adolescents and young adults worldwide. This includes cars, motorbikes, cycling and walking at the side of roads. Not all countries have the same safety standards as the UK. Hire cars, motorbikes and bicycles may not be adequately maintained or roadworthy. The wearing of helmets when riding motorbikes might not be compulsory. Other road users may not be as careful. Rules of the road are different in some countries, and very often they drive on a different side of the road, which can be disorientating for us.

WATER RELATED INJURIES

After road traffic accidents, drowning is the second most common form of death due to trauma, in travellers. It has been found that relatively low levels of alcohol increase the risk of suffering a fatal accident whilst boating. This risk increases as the levels of alcohol increase. Water and alcohol should never be mixed – except in a glass!

Standards on boats and ferries abroad might not be as good as at home. They are often overcrowded, safety equipment might be lacking or ineffective and crews not adequately trained in the event of accident.

Devastating spinal injuries are very easily sustained by jumping from a height, into water. Life would never be the same again. If you manage to escape death from your injuries you have life in a wheelchair – or worse - to look forward to.

Swim where you know it is safe to do so and where you are not alone, in case of difficulties in the water.

HIGH RISK SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

Alcohol will increase your bravado but reduce your competence. The highest incidence of injury in overseas travellers is in the 20 – 30's age group and a lot of these are due to adventure tourism. Sky diving, bungee jumping, scuba diving, white water rafting all great fun! Make sure the operator is reputable, the equipment is sound and the activity is properly supervised, and know your own limitations. Don't sign up for these activities after a drink!

ASSAULT

There is a risk of assault in every country and town in the world. It doesn't matter how tall/short/thin/fat we are none of us have any defence against knives and guns. In some less developed countries life is 'cheap', and less desirable characters will stop at nothing to get your wallet/purse/camera/jewellery or whatever else you have that they want. Be very aware of the risk; travel with a companion where possible, take local advice and don't visit unsafe areas, particularly after dark. In the event of an attack don't be a hero – give up your belongings as they are replaceable – you are not.

TATTOOS AND BODY PIERCINGS

Hepatitis B. Hepatitis C. HIV, - yes they are all yours if you want them – and you can keep them – because they are for life! These diseases are all blood borne diseases so are transmitted by blood and bodily fluids. In the UK most tattoos and body piercing parlours are regulated, and have to follow stringent infection control measures. This is not always the case abroad. Washing their instruments under the tap is not enough to prevent them giving you these diseases, obtained from their last customer. Don't have a body piercing or tattoo done abroad. Preferably don't have them at all! Today's trend is tomorrow's regret.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Many travellers behave differently away from home, whether they intend to or not. Increased sexual promiscuity and casual sexual relationships tend to occur during foreign travel. The risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease is high, when engaging in sexual activity with a casual sexual partner. The risk is extremely high when engaging in sexual activity with a commercial sex worker. Avoid the temptations of commercial workers; the diseases you are buying from them may be for life. If you must do it – condoms are the most effective preventative barrier to sexually transmitted diseases, used correctly, during all sexual contact. They are cheap, reliable and have no side effects. Take British condoms with you on your trip, whether or not you think you will need them. You can always bring them home again. Condoms bought abroad may not be subjected to the

same stringent testing standards that they are in the UK – so you might still be at risk if you use them. Abstinence is always an option and is 100% reliable against sexually transmitted diseases - and pregnancy!

ILLICIT DRUGS

They are illegal, expensive and dangerous, why use them? Studies show that a significant proportion of young people will take drugs for the first time whilst travelling abroad. What might be illegal at home might not be abroad, or vice versa. Never carry anything in your luggage for other people. That 'book' you have been asked to post to your new best friend's 'Aunty' back home, may well be concealing illegal drugs. A 43 year old British man has recently been imprisoned for 4 years in Dubai after traces of cannabis resin were found in the tread of his shoe. They were so small they were invisible to the naked eye. There are approximately 1000 British subjects incarcerated in prisons abroad for drug offences. Prison conditions are harsh and there is often no remand for good behaviour.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

30 – 50% of travellers suffer injuries or illness whilst travelling. Don't leave home without it! Most travel insurance will only cover up to 30 days travel, so if you are travelling for a longer period of time you will need to inform the company. Extreme sports, such as scuba diving to a depth greater than 30 metres and mountain climbing with ropes, are not always covered by the standard policy so check with the company. You will not be covered for participation in professional sports either, unless pre – arranged with your insurance company. Insurance cover whilst working abroad will need to be arranged also. Travel insurance can be expensive but medical and dental expenses abroad are very expensive and repatriation by air is extortionate. Don't scrimp on the essentials!

Enjoy yourself. Have fun. Be careful

USEFUL TRAVEL RELATED WEBSITES

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.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 for the European Health Insurance card
www.cdc.gov/travel	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
www.masta-travel-health.com	Medical Advice for Travellers Abroad
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.travelturtle.co.uk	Travel health advice
www.lonelyplanet.com	Travel guides, information and advice