



Air Travel

On long haul flights (over 2 hours) it is sensible to:

- * Be as comfortable as possible in your seat
- * Exercise your legs, feet and toes while sitting, every 30 minutes
- * Take short walks whenever feasible at least every couple of hours
- * Drink plenty of fluid and refrain from excessive alcohol as this causes dehydration
- * Consider compression hosiery, especially if you are at moderate to high risk of developing a DVT or have circulation problems

Web Sites

Travel Info & Malaria

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

www.nathnac.org

Safety/Documentation information

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Global Travel Clinic Locator

www.nomadtravel.co.uk

Backpacking

www.the-backpacking-site.com

Diabetes

www.diabetes.co.uk

HAVE A VERY SAFE AND ENJOYABLE TRIP



Watling Vale Medical Centre Travel Advice Leaflet



**This leaflet is designed to help you enjoy
your trip and to stay healthy**

Water

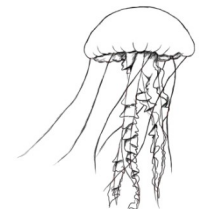
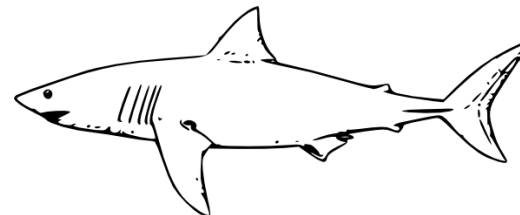
Diseases such as typhoid and diarrhoea can be caught from drinking contaminated water . Unless you know 100% that the water supply is safe where you are staying use only:

- ◇ Bottled, boiled or water treated by a cleaning agent
- ◇ Carbonated water or canned drinks
- ◇ Avoid ice cubes in your drinks
- ◇ Avoid cleaning your teeth with the local water supply

Swimming

Swim in designated areas only. Do not go into unknown water to swim. If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean **do not swim in fresh water lakes and streams**, you can catch a parasitic disease, called Bilharzia (Schistosomiasis), which can be fatal.

Try to avoid going barefoot. Wear protective footwear, even when swimming. Some marine life that live on the beach or the seafloor can inflict nasty and even fatal injuries. Whilst swimming in the sea always be observant i.e. for jellyfish, sharks and sea snakes. Check each country for their particular beasts.



Food

Contaminated food is the commonest source of many diseases abroad (Hepatitis A). You can help reduce the risk of these by following these guidelines:

- Only eat well-cooked fresh food. Avoid left over food and re-heated food.
- Ensure meat is well cooked especially barbecue food. Meat harbours infection more than vegetarian foods.
- Never drink un-pasteurised milk or eat foods made from this milk.
- Be aware of high risk foods such as dairy ice cream, quiche, shellfish, salad and strawberries, especially in the high risk countries.
- If eating cooked foods from street vendors ensure it is piping hot, but do avoid this if possible.

Cook it, peel it or forget it

How diseases are spread

Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the faecal oral route (from the stool to the mouth). To help prevent this, always wash your hands with soap and preferably hot water, after going to the toilet and before handling or eating food. Diarrhoea is the most common illness that the traveller will be exposed to abroad. It is caused by eating contaminated food and drinking fluids, which contain bacteria, viruses or parasites.

Risk of illness is higher in some countries than others.

High risk: North Africa, Sub Saharan Africa, Indian Continent, SE Asia, Mexico and The Middle East.

Medium Risk: Northern Mediterranean, Canary Islands and the Caribbean Islands.

Traveller's Diarrhoea

It can be a single episode or multiple episodes of very loose stools in a 24-hour period, often accompanied by stomach pains, cramps and vomiting and can severely disrupt the holiday. The main danger of diarrhoea is dehydration and if very severe can kill if left untreated. Treatment is rehydration. Commercially prepared rehydration solutions are available. They can be obtained from a pharmacy, either in tablet form or as a sachet i.e. **dioralyte**. Anti diarrhoea tablets can be used for adults (be aware can sometimes cause severe constipation) but should never be given to children under the age of 4 years of age and only on prescription for age 4-12 years. Very hot or very cold drinks will initiate bowel movement.

NONE OF THESE TABLETS SHOULD BE USED IF THE PERSON HAS A HIGH TEMPERATURE OR HAS BLOOD IN THEIR STOOL

Insurance

Take out adequate medical insurance. Ensure that the financial cover offered under your policy is enough to pay for an “unforeseen hospital admission” or to be flown back to Britain under medical supervision. Medical fees in America for example can run into millions very quickly and repatriation is horrendously expensive. If you are planning on doing activities such as paragliding, scuba diving, skiing etc, check you have the correct cover, as these can be defined as dangerous sports activities.

If an accident occurs during one of these activities and you have not declared it prior to the holiday, the insurance company could and do refuse to pay your medical fees or flights back to the UK.

If you are travelling through a European country, you will need your European medical card. This is replacing the EU form.

If you have a pre-existing medical condition, any recent operation or impending medical intervention or you regularly see your GP, you must inform the insurance company prior to travel.

Initially, remember your medical insurance is only partly protective and is only as good as the proximity of facilities, their quality and that of their staff. Hospitals can be far away, lack modern equipment, medicines and fully trained medical and nursing staff.

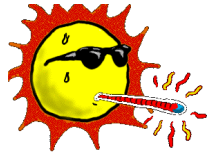
Medicines

Keep all medicines in your hand luggage, do not put in the suitcase as the hold of an aircraft can drop to below freezing. Always if possible have a back-up supply of your medicine and keep this in a separate place.

Inform the cabin crew if you are carrying medication such as insulin which needs to be administered by needle or if you suffer from epilepsy, ensure someone is aware and knows how to manage a fit should it occur. If Diabetic, consult your Diabetic Nurse before travel.

Always read the small print and the list of exclusions in your policy





Sun and heat

Sunburn and heat stroke causes serious problems to the traveller and their future health.

Both are preventable and can be avoided.

- ⇒ Increase exposure to the sun gradually.
- ⇒ Use sunblock creams on sensitive parts of the body that usually in England do not get exposed very often.
- ⇒ Use the appropriate 'SPF' factor cream. The higher the factor the more protection it provides.
- ⇒ Always reapply sun cream after swimming, washing or if you sweat a lot, even if the cream states it is waterproof.
- ⇒ Wear protective headwear, i.e. sun hats or baseball cap.
- ⇒ Don't forget the ears, back of the neck, nose and your feet.
- ⇒ Avoid sunbathing between 11:00am to 3:00pm, the sun's ultra violet rays are at their strongest and this is when the most harm is done. Even on cloudy days you can burn.
- ⇒ Take extra care of the children and those with red hair and pale skin.
- ⇒ Drink extra fluids 3 to 4 litres more than you would drink normally
- ⇒ Remember alcohol dehydrates you and makes you sleepy.



BURNING THE SKIN INCREASES YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING SKIN CANCER

When to seek medical advice

If the person has:

- A temperature and feels very unwell despite rehydration aids
- Blood in the stools
- Continuous diarrhoea for more than 48 hours (adults)
- Diarrhoea for more than 24 hours (children & the elderly)

Women who use the contraceptive pill and experience diarrhoea and vomiting will not have the full contraceptive protection, as the pill is not absorbed properly. Extra precautions will have to be used. Refer to your pill information leaflet. If condoms are to be used, use products with the British kite mark. Condoms in other countries can sometimes be of an inferior quality.

Hepatitis B and HIV

High risk places are the continents of Africa and Asia.

These diseases are transmitted by:

- Blood transfusions using poorly screened blood
- Medical and dental procedures using un-sterilised equipment
- The use of or the sharing of needles (body piercing, tattooing, acupuncture, drug use)
- Casual sexual contact (sexually transmitted diseases also spread this way, especially if not using a condom)
- Try to avoid walking barefoot even on beaches in case you step on a needle.



How to protect yourself

- Only accept a blood transfusion when absolutely essential, if possible get back to the UK, especially if you are in a less Developed country.
- If travelling to under developed countries or high risk areas pack a sterile medical and dental kit to have with you at all times.
- Avoid procedures such as tattooing, body piercing and acupuncture.
- Avoid casual sexual relations or paid sex workers, if you must, use a condom with a standard kite mark. Be aware condoms supplied in a developing country may have been used previously and washed out.



Remember alcohol and recreational drugs can make you carefree and your judgement will be affected, and could lead you to take risks you normally would not consider.

Mosquitoes

Mosquito flies, ticks and bugs cause many different types of diseases i.e. malaria, dengue fever and yellow fever. They can bite during the day as well as at night. It is important to try and not get bitten.

Mosquitoes that carry malaria bite from dusk to dawn, the dengue and yellow fever mosquitoes bite during the day.

- Wear light coloured clothes, long sleeves, trousers and skirts.
- Use **deet** .50% concentration (an alternative is Autan or an eucalyptus oil based insect repellent) on exposed skin, clothes needs to be sprayed too (**Permethrin**). Impregnated wrist and ankle bands are available.
- Always check the product is suitable for children/pregnant women and follow the recommended guidelines.
- Mosquito repellent does not like plastic, it disintegrates, but it is ok on skin, so be careful with contact lenses and watch straps.
- Mosquitoes are attracted by strong smells such as perfumes and deodorants.
- The repellent halves your sun protection factor. Put sun cream on first then insect repellent.
- If the room is not air conditioned, but screened then close the shutters early evening and spray the room with a knockdown spray. Do not rely on air conditioning to keep mosquitoes out. In malaria regions, if camping or sleeping in unprotected accommodation always sleep under a mosquito net that has been impregnated with permethrin.
- Mosquitoes are low flying, so protect your legs.



Electric buzzers, garlic, Vitamin B, and “I never get bitten” are not effective.

Malaria

If you are travelling to a country where malaria is a risk you will have been advised to take anti-malaria medication. This is extremely important as malaria is a serious disease and can be fatal. Being careful with your clothing and using sprays is not a substitute for anti-malarial medicines.

The anti-malarial medication reduces the risk of acquiring malaria but it is still possible to develop the disease. Malaria can present at any time, even up to a year or more after your trip. Symptoms can be flu like illness, backache, diarrhoea and joint pains. If you feel unwell, seek medical advice and tell the doctor the countries you have visited in the last year.

Anti-malarial medication obtained abroad may have a reduced strength!



Animal bites

- Rabies is present in most countries, including Europe. Rabies is fatal.
- Do not touch any animals. The main carriers are dogs/monkeys, racoons/ bats.
- If you are bitten by any animal, or licked on broken skin, in a country which has rabies then wash the area with soap and running water for 5 minutes.
- Seek medical help, even if you have been immunised. Do not allow the wound to be stitched.

If you are stung or bitten by an unknown insect, spider or a snake, then seek medical advice immediately.

Remember in most countries many snakes, spiders and other creepy crawlies are highly poisonous
DO NOT TOUCH



Accidents

Major leading causes of death in travellers are accidents due to swimming and road traffic accidents.

- Avoid swimming after eating, or drinking alcohol
- Never dive into unknown water, especially when the depth and possibility of rocks is unknown.
- Only swim in designated areas. Check currents, and be aware of the possibility of sharks, jellyfish and even crocodiles.
- Avoid drinking and driving.
- Avoid hiring mopeds and motorbikes. If you do hire them please wear a crash helmet and protective clothing.
- If hiring a car, try to hire from a reputable company, check the tyres, brakes and seat belts are in good working order. Try not to drive after dark in less developed countries.
- Avoid bungee jumping, paragliding and rubber inflatables behind power boats, if you have an accident and have not declared that you would be doing such activities like these, then your medical insurance may be null and void.