

# Travelling Healthy

## Avoiding the Health Hazards of Travelling

### Gastro-Intestinal Illness:

Traveller's diarrhoea and other gastrointestinal upset is common in travellers to developing countries as people are exposed to germs they have not encountered before. So to help avoid these upsets, consider the following guidelines.

### Safe Foods:

- Steaming hot, recently cooked food.
- Dry foods e.g. bread.
- Fruit with a thick, unbroken skin that you peel yourself.
- Commercially canned or pre-packed foods (check seals of packages).

### Unsafe Foods:

- Salads (raw foods).
- Raw, uncooked and undercooked seafood, meat, poultry.
- Unpasteurised milk and dairy products.
- Foods kept warm for long periods.
- Fruits with peeled or broken skin, thin skinned fruits etc.

### Safe Beverages:

- Water that has been vigorously boiled for one minute, covered and allowed to cool.
- Tea and coffee made with freshly boiled water.
- Commercially canned or bottled water, carbonated beverages, beer and wine (check the seal on bottled water and buy from a reputable store).
- Chemically disinfected water e.g. iodine.

### Unsafe Beverages:

- Tap water, stream water, don't brush your teeth with tap water.
- Avoid swallowing water from the shower, bath, pool or stream.
- Ice.

### Other Tips:

- Wash hands after the toilet and before eating (carry a packet of pre-soaped tissues like 'wet ones' for areas where you cannot wash).
- Ensure plates and utensils are clean and dry.
- Don't eat with wooden chopsticks! Use straws to drink from bottles.
- Don't put your toothbrush on communal bathroom benches or unclean surfaces.

## Bathing:

Do not wade or swim in lakes, dams or streams, or in areas where bilharzia (a disease caused by worms that penetrate skin)

e.g. Africa, parts of the Middle East and Asia. Bathing in the sea is safe from bilharzia.

## Footwear:

Do not walk bare-footed, as some worms can penetrate the skin. You also run the risk of injury. Use closed in footwear. The sand of sea beaches is considered safe from worms.

## Protection from Mosquitoes & Other Biting Insects:

- Mosquitoes carry many diseases like malaria and dengue fever. The best way to prevent these illnesses is to protect being bitten.
- Avoid being in rural areas between dusk and dawn.
- Wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, long socks, preferably tucked in.
- Wear light coloured clothes.
- Avoid perfumes.
- Use mosquito repellent and apply to exposed skin at four hourly intervals. Rid is a recommended product.
- Sleep in air-conditioned, screened rooms.
- Use insecticide spray in room if necessary (and/or Mosquito coils).
- Use mosquito net when rooms are not screened.
- Take antimalarial medication as prescribed.

## Animals:

Rabies occurs in many countries. Avoid contact with domestic and wild mammals (especially dogs, cats, bats and monkeys). If bitten, immediately wash the wound with soap and water and seek medical attention. Immunisation against rabies needs to commence within 48 hours of the bite.

## Injuries:

Injuries are the most common travel related cause of death. Most of these are from motorcycles. Do not take unnecessary risks as good emergency and medical care is not always available.

## Jet Lag:

### To reduce the effects:

- Increase fluids: bottled water and fruit juice are best.
- Avoid alcohol or carbonated fluids.
- Eat sparingly.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothes and shoes.
- Sleep if you can.
- Get up and walk around or exercise your limbs as much as possible.
- When you arrive at the new time zone, try to organise your activities to new time eg. eat at the new meal time, sleep at the new time.

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs):

Sexually transmittable disease is global. Certain countries are experiencing epidemics of certain STD'S like HIV. You must consider any new partner a RISK. If you think a sexual encounter is possible with someone other than an uninfected partner, you need to buy Australian standard condoms and lubricant. (In developing countries the local condoms may be of inferior quality). Never let semen, vaginal fluid or blood from a sexual partner come in contact with your body unless you know they do not have an STD. Also do not share needles or syringes. Avoid tattooing, body piercing, acupuncture or any penetration of the skin.

## Before you go):

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## Dental Check:

If you have not had a check up in six months, do so before you go.

## Medical Check:

If you are going on an extended trip to places where accessing health care might be difficult or if you have an on-going medical condition, see your doctor before you go.

## Fitness:

The fitter you are the better you will manage and enjoy your trip. This is very important if you will be cycling, trekking etc.

## Contact Us:

Phone: 53279477 or 53279470 Facsimile: 03 5327 9779  
<http://www.federation.edu.au/health-centre>

Travel Health—Health Centre  
Federation University Australia, Mt Helen Campus,  
PO Box 663, Ballarat Vic 3350