

WELLBEING

Travel Sickness

Holidays are about rest and relaxation but given that you have a 50 per cent chance of becoming unwell while abroad, it pays to be prepared and to pack accordingly

The tickets are booked, your passport is ready and your sandals, suntan lotion and swimsuit are already in the case. You are all prepped for the perfect summer holiday and the last thing on your mind is the idea of being unwell. But perhaps it should be. According to a survey commissioned by the Department of Health, one in two British travellers will become ill or be injured on holiday, falling foul of everything from insect bites and stings to sunburn and traveller's tummy, sprains and broken bones.

Last year, we Brits made 58 million trips abroad but we rarely consider the possibility of illness or an accident ruining our getaway. Luckily, there are some simple steps that should ensure your trip is a healthy one.

With more travelling further afield, it's a good idea to seek expert advice from a healthcare professional six to eight weeks before your flight. That means visiting your GP, healthcare clinic or a specialist travel clinic in time to get the relevant vaccinations along with any medication you need to take to boost your immunity ahead of your departure date. And always have the correct travel insurance in case of a medical emergency that might require a hospital stay or treatments.

In many EU countries you are covered by the EHIC card, which is available free of charge.

"Anyone travelling abroad should realise the risks and people revisiting familiar destinations especially need to be aware that they are not immune to such risks," warns Dr Jane Wilson-Howarth, a travel health expert. "More and more people are visiting hot, tropical destinations, with an estimated six million visits made by UK residents each year. It's vital that travellers are



aware that medical and hygiene standards may differ to those in the UK as in some regions, equipment used in clinics may not be sterile."

Dr Wilson-Howarth advises travelling with a small medical kit (complete with sterile sharps) and a bar of soap so you can also practise good personal hygiene while travelling.

TUMMY TROUBLES

Apart from insect bites and sunburn, the most

common cause of ill health on holiday is an upset stomach with diarrhoea. This can put sufferers out of action for days but following these simple guidelines should enable you to avoid the problem:

Clean up Wash your hands prior to handling food and eating and always after using the toilet. When abroad, carry sanitising gel or hand wipes in your bag at all times.

Be water wise Only consume water if you are sure of its purity – this includes water used for making ice cubes and cleaning your teeth.

Bottled water is usually safe, as are hot tea and coffee, beer and wine.

Be probiotic Give your digestive immunity a boost with a probiotic such as Optibac For Travelling Abroad, specifically formulated to help your body cope with the influx of different foods and water.

Avoid excess alcohol It can be tempting to kick-start your holiday by hitting the booze but it's often too much alcohol, rather than local food, that is responsible for tummy upsets.

Go for ginger Good for relieving nausea, a packet of ginger biscuits is handy if you are travelling with young children prone to sea or air sickness. Or try Veganicity's Ginger Tincture, which can be added to water to help settle the stomach. Motion sickness can sometimes be avoided by

focusing on the horizon or a fixed point when travelling by car or boat.

Sachet sense Pack rehydration sachets in case you do succumb to traveller's tummy and cannot eat. If you're on the go, melt-in-the-mouth medicine designed to stop diarrhoea in its tracks is useful if you are not be able to get to a toilet easily. 

• For more information, visit fitfortravel.nhs.uk. For details on the EHIC card, visit ehic.org.uk.

JUST IN CASE

Be prepared for minor illnesses and ailments with our holiday health kit



Optibac Probiotics For Travelling Abroad, £10.20



Dioralyte Blackcurrant, £3.86, will rehydrate you after sickness



Autan Insect Repellent Protection Plus Multi-Insect Barrier Pump Spray, £7.50, will protect the entire family from bites and stings



Imodium Instant, £3.45 for 6 tablets, from Boots, dissolves on your tongue to fight diarrhoea



Solve Sunburn Relief, £9.95, from Boots, contains ibuprofen to help mild to moderately sunburnt skin



Veganicity Ginger Tincture, £5.95, visit veganicity.com, a really handy way to prevent travel sickness