

WELLBEING

TRAVEL SICK?

Don't let ill health ruin a much-needed break. Our healthy holiday hints will send minor ailments packing and should help keep more serious complaints at bay

Everyone loves a holiday, especially us Brits. Each year, we take ten million trips abroad, most of them during the summer months, but while we may be looking for rest and relaxation, according to research, we have a 50-50 chance of becoming unwell while away, suffering anything from minor irritations such as sunburn and insect bites to an upset stomach and even malaria. To ensure your holiday is a healthy one, follow our top tips.

THINK AHEAD

You probably put a lot of care and attention into your holiday wardrobe and your itinerary, but what about healthcare? When it comes to vaccinations, forward preparation is vital. "If you're travelling abroad this summer, planning ahead will help you have a safe and healthy trip," says Bobby Sira, Boots UK healthcare development manager. "Be holiday ready by visiting your local in-store travel vaccination and

health advice service a few weeks before you head off as some vaccinations can take up to six weeks to take effect.”

To find out whether your destination requires vaccinations or anti-malaria tablets, visit the National Travel Health Network and Centre at nathnac.org.

INVEST IN INSURANCE

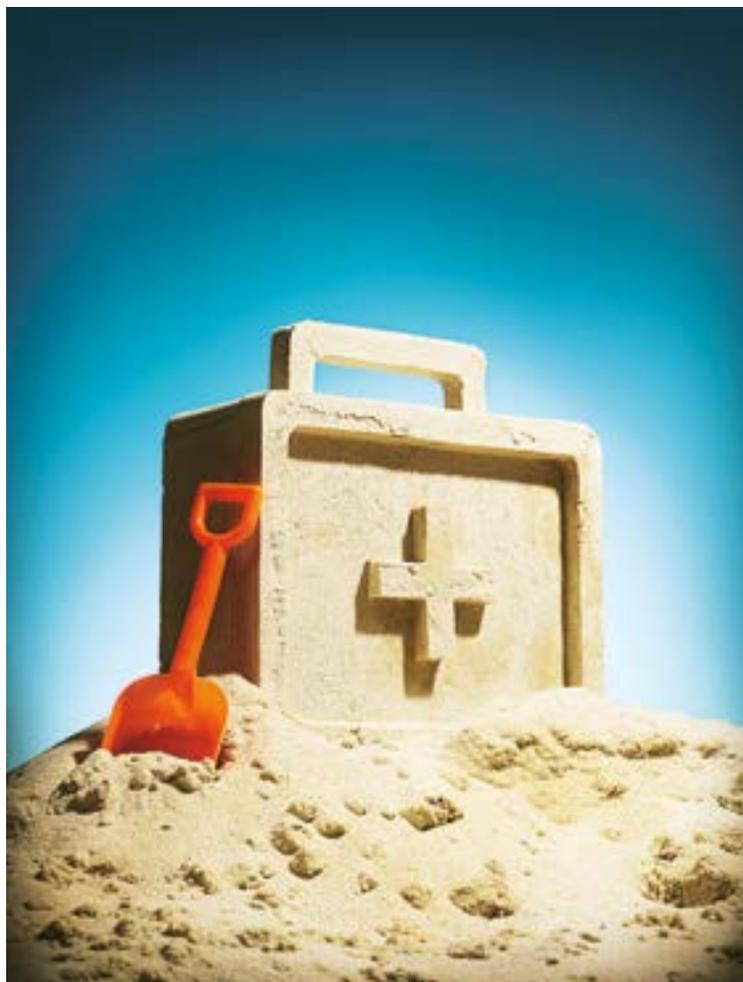
If you're travelling to an EU country, it's likely that you will be covered by the EHIC card, which you can get free at ehic.org.uk. This entitles you to free or reduced-cost health treatment and services in many European countries. However, as you may still be liable for some of your treatment, it pays to take out travel insurance, which is also a must for all travel outside the EU. Make sure you purchase a policy that covers costs in the event of a medical emergency requiring a hospital stay or treatments and remember to disclose any existing medical conditions or you could find yourself at a loss if you need to make a claim.

KIT YOURSELF OUT

A healthy holiday kit should include any prescribed medications you take daily along with painkillers, antiseptic, insect repellent, antihistamine tablets or topical gel, anti-diarrhoea pills and sunscreen. It is also a good idea to have plasters on hand. These everyday essentials will be useful wherever you are going.

IN-FLIGHT CARE

Cramped seating, dehydration and boredom – flying long haul is never that pleasant and it can also have serious consequences for your health. Deep vein thrombosis (DVT), when a blood clot forms in the leg and then travels around the body, has been linked to long flights. It occurs when blood flows too slowly through the veins during a long period of inactivity so when flying long haul, reduce your risk by stretching your legs whenever you can as well as getting up from your seat to walk around. Many airlines feature anti-DVT exercises in their in-flight magazines, which you should do every half an hour, and you



should also drink regularly but avoid alcohol, wear loose, comfortable clothes and invest in a pair of compression stockings (flight socks), which are proven to be effective in preventing the pooling of blood that can lead to DVT. Take advice on size and fitting from a pharmacist or other health professional before you buy as it's vital that flight socks are measured and worn correctly or they can make the problem worse.

Evidence suggests that pregnant women, the obese, anyone with a history of stroke or heart disease, people who have had recent surgery and women taking hormone replacement therapy are at increased risk of developing DVT on flights of eight hours or more so if you fall into any of these groups, seek advice from your local GP before travelling.

BUZZ WORDS

One tiny mosquito can ruin even the most luxurious hotel room. Usually active between dusk and dawn, they are attracted to humans by body heat, smell and the carbon dioxide we breathe out. Research shows that products containing the chemical Deet – available in sprays, roll-ons, sticks and creams – are the most effective insect repellents and are safe when used correctly. Your GP or travel health clinic will also be able to tell you whether the area you are going to is malarial and what protection is advised.

TUMMY TROUBLES

Along with sunburn and insect bites, traveller's diarrhoea is one of the most common holiday complaints. It's not just the change in the food you eat that is to blame, drinking more alcohol than usual, consuming contaminated water and overexposure to sun are common culprits. Go easy on holiday cocktails and beware of drinking water of unknown origin, including ice cubes. Stick to bottled water and if you do find yourself suffering, top your bottle up with a rehydration sachet which helps replace fluids and salts lost through diarrhoea, vomiting and too much sun. You can buy sachets or dissolvable tablets of rehydration salts from your pharmacy and then you simply add them to water. Your

doctor or pharmacist may also recommend rehydration drinks for children, who are prone to suffering.

JET LAG

Experts warn that it can take one day of your holiday – or your return home – to get over each hour of time difference between destinations, which means jet lag could effectively wipe out shorter breaks. There are ways to speed things up, though. “As soon as you board the plane, set your watch to the time in the country you are travelling to and try to eat and sleep according to appropriate times at your destination,” suggests TV's Dr Dawn Harper. Also get outside as much as possible when you arrive as exposure to daylight will help reset your body clock. ☑

JUST IN CASE...

Be prepared for common complaints with our holiday travel kit:



➔ **Neal's Yard Remedies to Roll Travel**, £6.50, visit nealsyardremedies.com; a blend of lavender and frankincense that helps you to relax on long haul flights and masks plane smells

➔ **Boots Repel Insect Repellent Spray with Deet**, £4.25, from Boots



➔ **Imodium Instant Melts**, £6.79, from Boots; can be taken on the go without water, making them ideal for diarrhoea emergencies



➔ **Anthisan Bite & Sting Cream**, £3.49, from Boots

➔ **O.R.S Oral Rehydration Salts in Lemon**, £6.99, from Boots



➔ **Sweaty Betty Compression Sock**, £20 (was £25), visit sweatybetty.com