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Health
Tips

Author: Dr. Joseph DiCorpo, Chief Medical Consultant for Assist America Last
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Health Tips for Summer Trips

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By Dr. Joseph DiCorpo, Chief Medical Consultant for Assist America
Jun 15, 2009 - 2:51:49 PM

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(HealthNewsDigest.com) - Amidst the fun and sun of summer vacation there is unfortunately always the possibility of having a health emergency away from home. Even the mildest health problem can take on monumental proportions while in unfamiliar surroundings—in some places, just finding a pharmacy is a challenge. Although some simple preparations ahead of time can

mitigate many medical situations, few travelers take the time plan effectively in advance for illness or injury during travel.

Dr. Joseph DiCorpo, Chief Medical Consultant for Assist America, a Princeton, N.J.-based provider of global emergency medical services for travelers (www.assistamerica.com), offers the following simple tips to help keep your trips as healthy and enjoyable as possible:

Bring a list of important emergency telephone numbers—your medical insurance, travel assistance provider, personal physician and two family or friend contacts back home—and keep it in your carry-on bag. Familiarize yourself with your insurance policy and assistance coverage, including any specific procedures, limitations or exclusions (for example: Medicare does not cover hospital or medical costs outside the U.S.). If you will be traveling outside of the U.S., before leaving do some quick research on the emergency medical numbers in your destination country (911 is not internationally recognized). Check your medications and make sure you have enough supply for your time away, plus a little extra in case of delays. Pack medications in your purse or carry-on bag (not in your checked luggage) and keep prescriptions in their original, labeled containers. If any of your medications are controlled or injectable substances, carry a note from the prescribing physician on official letterhead. Also make sure you know or have on hand the generic name for your prescriptions—brand names are not always recognized abroad and you could experience difficulties if you need a refill.

Learn about health risks associated with your destination. Plan for necessary vaccinations and inoculations well in advance of your trip. Some vaccines and medications require shots or oral administration starting weeks before departure and continuing after your return.

If you wear glasses or contact lenses, pack a copy of your lens prescription and a second pair of glasses if possible.

Make a copy of your passport and leave it behind with a family member or friend who can fax it to you in an emergency. Also take along an additional copy and pack it in a separate place from the original, just in case.

Pack a health kit appropriate for your destination. You will be very thankful to be able to take care of minor health needs without disrupting your vacation to search for medical supplies. Suggested contents include:

- Personal prescription medications
- Destination-specific medications, such as anti-malarials
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Antihistamine and/or decongestant
- Anti-motion sickness medication
- Pain reliever such as acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen
- Mild laxative
- Cough suppressant/expectorant
- Throat lozenges
- Antacid
- Antifungal and antibacterial ointments or creams
- 1% hydrocortisone cream
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Adhesive bandages
- Lip balm
- Happy trails!



Dr. Samieh Sam Rizk,
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Bryan G. Forley, M.D.,
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