

Sawston Medical Practice TRAVEL CLINIC

Basic medical advice:

Accidents

Road traffic accidents and drowning are a major causes of death in travellers.

Remember;

1. Never drink and drive
2. If hiring a car choose one that is well maintained
3. Avoid hiring motorbikes and mopeds
4. Use reliable taxi firms
5. Avoid alcohol and food before swimming.
6. Never dive into water unless you know it is deep enough
7. Only swim in safe water beware of currents, jellyfish etc

Food and water.

Food and water are common sources of disease abroad. Unless you know the water supply is safe use bottled water. You can boil water or use sterilising tablets as an alternative. This includes for cleaning teeth. When buying drinks avoid ice cubes. Wash hands well after using the toilet and before preparing food. Only eat fruit that needs peeling first.

Avoid; shellfish, undercooked meat and fish, leftovers, reheated food, unpasteurised milk, salads and buying food from street vendors.

Travellers diarrhoea.

This is the commonest illness in travellers. Rehydration is the most important consideration. You may wish to take rehydration sachets with you. You can use medication if the diarrhoea persists over 24 hours if there is no blood or fever. Seek medical advice if needed. Women on oral contraception may have lower levels of absorption so follow the advice in your pill packet regarding extra precautions.

Malaria.

Please consult a travel clinic if you are travelling to an area with malaria to discuss prevention. Malaria is caught from mosquito bites as no malaria tablet is 100% effective, it is best to avoid being bitten. The travel clinic can discuss more detailed ways to prevent bites if you wish. You should take adequate repellents (e.g. those containing DEET of 50% or more, please note DEET can damage leather and contact lens. Do not use DEET on children under 5 yrs old). They should be sprayed on skin and clothes. Apply spray on top of sun creams. Take mosquito nets and plug in repellents. Repellent buzzers are NOT effective. After dusk keep shutters closed, spray the room and wear long sleeved tops with trousers. Clothing and nets impregnated with spray can be brought and are very useful if back packing. Never camp near stagnant water.

Make sure you obtain the correct tablets to prevent malaria for your destination.

Seek medical help if you develop any symptoms such as fever and remember malaria can present up to 1 year after you trip.

Flying

Prevent deep vein thrombosis (DVT) by drinking plenty of non – alcoholic fluids, avoid alcohol, wear flight stockings, exercise your legs every ½ hour. See your GP before flying if you have ever had a DVT or pulmonary embolism before.

Sun advice

Avoid excessive sun exposure by wearing sun hats, applying high factor sun cream and staying out of the midday sun. Make sure you drink plenty of non alcoholic drinks, avoid too much alcohol.

Insurance cover and personal security

Make sure you have adequate insurance cover for your needs. Check it includes repatriation in the event of serious illness. Tell your insurance company about any pre existing medical problems. Check the foreign and Commonwealth office website before to see if there are currently any security issues at www.fco.gov.uk/travel. Obtain a EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) for free or reduced rate medical care in Europe. Apply on line at www.dh.gov.uk or phone 0845 606 2030 or by filling in the form available at the post office.

Hepatitis B and HIV

These can be transmitted through bodily fluids such as during intercourse or medical procedures with unclean equipment. Speak to the travel clinic regarding immunisations if you plan to have any medical procedure abroad. Avoid getting tattoos, piercing or acupunctures overseas. Consider taking with you a sterile medical pack (obtained from a pharmacy) and condoms if required.

Animal bites.

Seek medical help if you have an animal bite. As well as infection, rabies is present in many countries. Untreated rabies results in death. Do not touch animal abroad if possible. If you are licked on broken skin wash the wound immediately with soap and running water for at least 5 minutes and apply an antiseptic cream. Seek medical help if you have any concerns.

High altitude.

Altitude sickness may occur over 2500m. It is best to get medical advice from travel clinic if you are planning to go higher than this.

Helpful websites ;

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

www.nathnac.org

www.fco.gov.uk/travel

www.immunisation.nhs.uk

www.malariahotspots.co.uk