

Overdale Medical Practice

Travel Safety Advice



Food/Water

Travellers' diarrhoea is spread mainly through food and water. It is one of the commonest health problems experienced during travel. Travellers' diarrhoea usually gets better within 3 – 5 days.

Way to help prevent it:

- Only drink boiled or bottled/canned water (this should also be used to clean your teeth)
- Avoid ice in your drinks.
- Only eat freshly cooked food which has been cooked thoroughly.
- Avoid food that has been kept warm.
- Only drink or eat unpasteurised milk and dairy products.
 - boil milk that is unpasteurised,
- Ensure shellfish and seafood has been well cooked. (Shellfish can be hazardous even if well cooked)
- Avoid ice-cream.
- Be careful with salads (unless you know what they have been washed in)
- Peel fruit before you eat it.
- WASH YOUR HANDS!

**Remember:
COOK IT, PEEL IT OR LEAVE IT!!**

What if you get Travellers' diarrhoea

- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic clear fluids such as bottled water, diluted fruit juices or oral rehydration sale solutions such as Dioralyte (available at most chemists or supermarkets)
- You can take anti-diarrhoea medication if it is disrupting your plans such as Loperamide also known as Imodium or diphenoxylate plus atropine also known as Lomotil:
 - Not recommended for children under 12 years
 - It may take 1 – 2 hours to begin to work.
 - Taking too much of these medicines might make you constipated.
- Seek medical advice if:
 - Blood or slime (mucous) in your diarrhoea
 - A high fever
 - Severe pain in your stomach
 - You cannot continue your normal activities and you have more than 6 episodes of diarrhoea in a 24hour period.

Females taking the oral contraceptive pill may not have full protection if suffering with diarrhoea & vomiting. Extra precautions will need to be taken such as condoms. If using condoms take a supply of good quality ones that are CE approved.

Sun and Heat

Sunburn can have a long-lasting affect and can be the cause of skin cancer. Enjoy the sun safely by following these guidelines:



- Build up sun exposure gradually.
- Spend time in the shade especially between 11am and 3pm when the sun is at its hottest.
 - Just 10 minutes of strong sunshine is all it takes to burn pale skin.
 - ALWAYS keep babies and toddlers in the shade whenever possible.
- Cover up with suitable clothing.
 - Pay special attention to the shoulder which burn easily.
 - Consider t-shirts even in the water, especially for children who burn a lot quicker.
- Wear Sunglasses
 - Those with an EU CE mark are proven to offer protection against UV radiation.
- Wear a hat even in the water.
 - A wide brimmed hat will offer more protection.
- Sunscreen – no sunscreen provides absolute protection so it should be used liberally and reapplied often.
 - Use sunscreens with SPF 30+ or more to all areas. A waterproof sunscreen is better.
 - Check the expiry date of your sunscreen.
 - Apply sunscreen 20-30 minutes before going outside and reapply at least every 2 hours.
 - Reapply sunscreen after you have been swimming or if you have sweated a lot.
 - Don't forget to protect your lips with a SPF30+ lip balm.
- Drink extra non-alcoholic fluids in hot climates to avoid dehydration.

How to treat sunburn

- Get out of the sun as soon as possible.
- Cool the skin with a cool (not cold) shower, bath or damp towel (take care not to let a baby or young child get too cold)
- Apply a soothing aftersun cream or spray.
- Drink plenty of water to cool down and prevent dehydration.
- Painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, will ease the pain.
- Keep the sunburnt area out the direct sunlight until the skin is fully healed.
- **DO NOT**
 - Apply ice to sunburnt skin.
 - Pop any blisters
 - Scratch or try to remove peeling skin.
- Seek medical advice if:
 - Skin is blistered and swollen.
 - Have a very high temperature.
 - Feel very tired, dizzy, and sick.
 - Have a headache and muscle cramps.
 - Your baby or young child has sunburn.



Insect and animal bites

Mosquito bites are common in warmer countries. Generally, they are more active at dusk and dawn. The bite can cause a small itchy red bump on your skin. Some people develop an allergic skin reaction, and the bump can become large.



To avoid being bitten:

- Use an insect repellent containing DEET on top of your sunscreen. Pay particular attention to exposed skin.
- Cover up skin as much as possible. Wear light, loose fitting clothing.
- Wear clothing with high neckline, long sleeves, long trousers, skirt, or dress.
- Use air conditioning or oscillating fan.
- Avoid camping near stagnant water.
- Use a mosquito net if sleeping in high-risk areas.

Take anti-malaria tablets as prescribed if they are recommended for the area, you are visiting.

Malaria

Malaria is a serious infection spread by mosquitoes. It is important it is diagnosed and treated quickly.

Symptoms of malaria:

- High temperature
- Headache and feeling confused.
- Feeling very tired and sleepy
- Feeling and being sick, tummy pain and diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite
- Muscle pain
- Yellow skin or whites of the eyes
- A sore throat, cough and difficulty breathing.

Symptoms usually appear between 7 – 18 days after you've been bitten. Symptoms may appear months after travel.

Animal bites

Rabies is a rare but serious infection that's usually caught from a bite or scratch from an infected animal. It is vital that you seek medical attention immediately even if you have previously had the rabies vaccination, as rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear.

If bitten:

- Wash with soap and water immediately.
- Apply alcohol if possible.
- Seek medical advice quickly. If working with animals abroad or visiting remote areas, you may need a rabies vaccination.

Accidents and Insurance

The two major risks for travellers abroad are Road traffic accidents and drowning. Many countries do not have the same safety regulations as we have in the UK.

Swimming

- Be careful when diving into pools – make sure you know the depth before attempting to dive.
- Don't swim if under the influence of alcohol.
- Be aware of your own swimming ability and fitness before hitting the surf.
- If snorkelling in open water, use a buoyancy aid.
- Swim parallel to the beach, not away from it.
- Never swim at unpatrolled beaches and never swim alone or at night.
- Always supervise children in the water.
- Ensure equipment such as boats, jet skis, life jackets are fit for purpose and in good condition.
- Ensure you have a water sport travel insurance to cover any accidents.



On the road

- Check equipment before hiring scooters, mopeds, and cars.
- Ensure you have the correct insurance to cover yourself and the vehicle.
- Wear protective clothing provided such as helmets, seatbelts etc.

NEVER drink alcohol or take drugs if you are going to drive, swim or take part in a water sport.

Air Travel

Long flights are thought to cause a slightly increased risk of Deep Vein Thrombosis. How to reduce the risk when travelling:

- Every half hour or so, bend and straighten your legs, feet and toes when you are seated.
- Press the balls of your feet down hard against the floor or footrest every so often.
- Take a walk up and down the aisle every hour or so when it is safe to do so.
- Make sure you have as much space as possible in front of you for your legs to move. Try to avoid having bags under the seat in front of you.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic drinks
- You can also purchase flight socks.



Top Tips

- Shake your shoes out before putting them on
- Avoid tattoos and body piercings abroad (safety standards will not be the same as in the UK)
- Visit <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice> for more travel advice.