

ALL ABOARD: PREPARING FOR HEALTHY TRAVEL

Prepared by:

**Claremont Behavioral Services
(800) 834-3773**

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For many of us with loved ones in locations near and far, the holiday season means travel, travel, travel. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is the busiest travel day of the year—did you know that Thanksgiving Day proper is one of the quietest days of the year for travel of any kind: auto, train, plane? Whenever you travel and whatever your mode of transportation, it is important to prepare yourself mentally and physically for what often is a bumpy ride.

These resource materials provide helpful tips on how to:

- ❑ Test your knowledge of healthy travel
- ❑ Learn health precautions for travel
- ❑ Cope with fears about the safety of flying
- ❑ Use your EAP benefit for support

Don't forget that your EAP provides the full-range of services to support your general wellness during the holidays and all year-round:

- ❑ Counseling
- ❑ Legal consultations
- ❑ Financial consultations
- ❑ Dependent care consultation and referral
- ❑ Community resources

Claremont distributes this information to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and personal matters.
For confidential help, call: 800-834-3773 or visit www.claremonteap.com.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HEALTHY TRAVEL?

Before you head to the airport for your vacation abroad, have you thought about your health? Have you received the necessary immunizations? Do you know whom to call in an emergency? Take this quiz to test your knowledge of healthy travel.

1. International travel may require prophylactic medicines against malaria or a vaccine against yellow fever. How long before departure should you see your doctor?

- A. 14 days
- B. 10 days
- C. 5 days
- D. 3 days

2. Hepatitis A can be contracted during travel to which of these regions?

- A. Central America
- B. Western Europe
- C. Eastern Europe
- D. A and C

3. Blood clots can develop in the lower leg during extended air travel. How often should you move around to keep your circulation normal?

- A. every 15 minutes
- B. every 30 minutes
- C. every hour
- D. every two hours

4. If you become ill while traveling abroad, where should you call for help?

- A. your doctor
- B. the U.S. Embassy
- C. the nearest hospital
- D. your health-insurance company

5. What kind of meals can help the body cope with jet lag?

- A. those with some fatty foods and complex carbohydrates
- B. those high in carbohydrates
- C. those high in protein, low in calories
- D. those high in complex carbohydrates

6. Low humidity and recirculated air in airplanes can cause dehydration. Which of these beverages hydrate the best?

- A. colas
- B. coffee
- C. alcoholic beverages
- D. fruit juice

7. Which of these beverages would be the safest to drink while traveling abroad?

- A. bottled water
- B. canned soft drinks
- C. hot tea
- D. B and C

- 8. Which of these foods would likely be safe to eat?**
- A. fresh green salads
 - B. cold meat plates
 - C. oranges that you peel
 - D. rice
- 9. Which alcoholic beverages are least likely to harbor bacteria?**
- A. beer
 - B. wine
 - C. alcohol mixed with a bottled soft drink
 - D. A and B
- 10. Which of these first-aid items should you always travel with?**
- A. sterile bandages
 - B. antibiotic ointment
 - C. thermometer
 - D. all of the above

The answers

1. A. See your doctor 14 days before departure. Some vaccines for yellow fever may take up to 12 days to develop antibodies.
2. D.
3. B. Move around every 30 minutes. Movement prevents blood from pooling.
4. B. The best choice is the U.S. Embassy. Embassy staff can recommend English-speaking doctors or the best hospital in your locale.
5. C. The best meals for jet lag are those high in protein, low in calories. Also, limit your intake of alcoholic and caffeinated beverages.
6. D. Fruit juice will help you rehydrate. Caffeinated and alcoholic beverages dehydrate the body by speeding up the rate of urination. For optimum rehydration, drink one cup of water for each hour of flight time.
7. D.
8. C. Avoid uncooked vegetables and moist dishes such as rice that could have been sitting at room temperature.
9. D. Mixing alcohol with a soft drink doesn't kill any organisms in the latter. And the ice may be made from tap water.
10. D.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS WHEN YOU TRAVEL

Q. How can I improve plane travel?

A. Most people don't have any problems when they fly, but it's possible to make airplane travel safer and more comfortable. Here are some tips:

- Carry enough of all your medicines in your carry-on luggage. Ask your doctor if you should change your dosages if your eating and sleeping times will change at your destination. Bring enough medicine to last your whole trip. Take extra medicine with you in case your return trip is delayed.
- If you have diabetes or epilepsy, carry a notification and identification card (such as the Diabetes Alert Card from the American Diabetes Association; phone 800-DIABETES, or write the to the American Diabetes Association, 1660 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314). Have the name and phone number of your doctor with you in case of an emergency. Remember to bring along the names and dosages of all your medicines.
- Because the air in airplanes is very dry, drink nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages and water so you don't get dehydrated.

Q. What can I do about jet lag?

A. Follow these tips:

- Get plenty of sleep before you leave
- Don't drink a lot of alcohol
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Avoid overeating
- Exercise as much as you can on your trip
- Use sleep medicines for only a few days
- Get used to a new time zone by going along with the local meal and bedtime schedules

Q. What about pain in my ears?

A. If you usually have ear pain while flying, try taking a decongestant medicine before you get on the plane the next time you travel. You can also swallow often and chew gum during the flight. Babies can suck on a bottle or a pacifier during the flight. These tips work better if you try them before your ears start to hurt.

Q. What else can I do?

A. Even healthy people can get blood clots in their legs after long flights. Try to walk every now and then during your flight (unless the crew tells you not to). It also helps to drink enough water, to stretch your calf muscles while you're sitting and to wear support stockings.

If your doctor wants you to take oxygen when you travel, remember to tell the airline about this far in advance of your flight. The airline will provide oxygen for you, for a fee. Federal air regulations don't allow you to carry your own oxygen unit on the plane. You will have to make arrangements ahead of time for oxygen at your destination and also for layovers between flights. You can also arrange for special meals or a wheelchair ahead of time, if needed.

It's dangerous to fly right after scuba diving. You'll need to wait 12 to 24 hours after diving. Ask your doctor or diving authorities for guidelines on flying after scuba diving.

FEAR OF FLYING: LEARNING TO FLY COMFORTABLY

If you are afraid of flying, you've got lots of company. Various surveys suggest that 1 in 5 or 1 in 6 Americans identify themselves as "fearful flyers." Some experience only moderate apprehension before a flight and more acute distress during take-off. Others fly but live in fear of even the slightest turbulence.

For others, the fear of flying may keep them from visiting relatives, taking a job promotion that would require occasional travel or taking a trip they've dreamed about much of their life. Such avoidance can contribute to marital friction when one partner very much wants to travel. It can lead to marked shame and self-denigration among those who feel that they cannot face flying. For some, the fear of flying is an isolated concern; for others, it is just one dimension of a broader anxiety disorder.

Fear of flying can take many forms, most commonly including:

- Fears about the **safety** of flying. Most people assume that the fear of crashing is paramount, but this is only true for 1/3-1/2 of fearful flyers. Such fears are more pervasive after a well-publicized crash.
- Fear of **frightening feelings**, including "feeling out of control" and the symptoms of a panic attack.
- **Associated fears:**
 - a) claustrophobic concerns
 - b) fear of the unknown or misunderstood
 - c) fear of giving up control
 - d) fear of the possibility of turbulence or bad weather
 - e) fear of losing composure or "making a scene"
 - f) fear of heights

If you are experiencing these symptoms and would like to talk with a counselor, take advantage of professional assistance by calling your EAP. Call Claremont at (800) 834-3773.

COPING WITH FEARS ABOUT THE SAFETY OF FLYING

Many of us have fears about the safety of flying. However, many of these fears are not based on real data. Hopefully, the facts and statistics below will enhance our ability to cope with fears about the safety of flying.

Fear: “The plane is likely to crash. No matter how safe they say it is, it feels like my plane is the one that will go down.”

Rational response:

- Various studies report that the computed death risk per flight on a scheduled domestic airline is between 1/5 million and 1/10 million.
- A study of airline fatalities between 1989-1999 suggested that someone who takes a daily airline flight could, statistically speaking, fly **every day for 31,000 years** before facing a fatal crash. (Barnett, MIT)
- Average annual fatalities in the United States:
 - Automobile occupants = 40,000
 - Pedestrians = 8,000
 - Airline passengers = 100
- Most of our everyday activities involve some measure of risk that we construe as an “acceptable risk” in the service of convenience or pleasure. It is estimated that flying on a major airline is safer than using electrical power, bicycling, swimming, hunting, x-rays, and anesthesia. Statistically, the risk of fatality by airline flight is comparable to the risk of fatality by **taking a bath**.
- In any given three month period, there are more people killed on American roads than have been killed by all the airliner crashes in the history of American aviation.
- **Rational versus emotional risk assessment: What are the odds?** (From *What The Odds Are*, by Lee Krantz)
 - You will eventually die in a car crash 1 in 125
 - You will be a victim of violence in the suburbs 1 in 2,000
 - You will develop a brain tumor 1 in 25,000
 - You will die in a fire this year..... 1 in 40,000
 - You will win a state lottery jackpot 1 in 4,000,000
 - You will be killed in an airplane crash 1 in 4,600,000

Fear: “What if we run into bad weather or lightning?”

Rational Response:

- The weather is constantly monitored by radar and radio both onboard by the crew and on the ground. Every effort is made to divert the plane around or above thunderstorms so that you will have a smooth and comfortable flight. If you are in a lightning storm, you are much safer in an airplane than on the ground. The plane is a conductor which lightning can strike without hurting either the plane or its passengers.
- “Wind shear” seems to have contributed to some well-publicized crashes. This has prompted design and installation of wind shear detectors at major airports and on-board wind shear detectors on many airplanes. Pilots are now trained in simulators to manage dangerous wind shear, drawing on data gathered from previous crashes. Veteran pilot T.W. Cummings notes, “Perilous wind shear probably occurs only once in every twenty million takeoffs or landings.”

Fear: “What if we run into turbulence?”

Rational Response:

- Turbulence is not a threat to the structure or function of the airplane. Modern airplanes are built to handle much more force than is exerted in even the roughest turbulence. Turbulence feels dangerous, but it is not. Pilots try to avoid turbulence for your comfort, knowing that a turbulent flight may make you less likely to choose their airline for your next flight.
- However, turbulence does cause many injuries every year when unrestrained passengers are jostled and hurt. Some experts recommend keeping your seat belt fastened at all times to prevent such injury. With your seat belt fastened, turbulence is no more significant than riding on a bumpy road or a choppy water surface. Just because you can't see turbulence doesn't mean that the plane can somehow drop from the sky like a brick. Turbulence is merely a pothole in the sky.
- Turbulence is uncomfortable because it can leave you feeling more out-of-control of the situation. A vicious circle is created as you feel more alarmed and then overreact to subsequent motions of the plane. Remind yourself that your feeling a loss of control does not mean that the plane and the pilot are not in control. Try not to fight and resist the plane's movements during turbulence—try to go with them, reminding yourself that there is nothing abnormal or dangerous about such motions even though they can feel jarring.

Fear: “I don't trust the plane!”

Rational Response:

- Airliners are carefully designed to fly safely and efficiently no matter how heavy and awkward they may appear to you. Even a 747 operates efficiently according to simple laws of physics - they do not somehow defy natural forces in order to fly!
- If your fear of flying is primarily about the fear of the unknown or misunderstood, read about the mechanics of flight and talk to a pilot about what you've read.
- From engines to emergency mechanisms, from hydraulics to electricals, from computers to navigational aids, there are back-up systems, even multiple back-up systems for virtually everything.

Final Note About Safety:

Consider the “*acceptable risks*” you take dozens of times each day to improve the quality of your life. Decide whether you are willing to view flying as yet another acceptable risk. Of course, safety cannot be guaranteed. However, do not mistake possibility for probability. Remember that your risk assessment is driven by your *feelings* of danger, not the actual danger. Be sure you are not using your fears about safety as a rationalization for not facing frightened feelings or scary symptoms which you have come to associate with flying. As Reid Wilson has noted, you are unlikely to make progress until you, first, decide to trust the airline industry and, second, decide to trust your own body. Initially, this will feel like blind, naïve trust, but it is the only way to move forward toward dampening your fears. If you are still not willing, don't fly.

Source: The Anxiety and Stress Disorders Institute of Maryland, LLP

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