



Travel in Health - Business Traveller



General

Ask any business colleague and they will confirm that inter-continental travelling brings its own special brand of stress and strain. Missed connections, climatic changes, new unfamiliar contacts, language uncertainty and many more difficulties all add together to ensure that the 'glamour' of business travel is not all that it is made out to be. The business traveller faces problems each day and it is essential that they remain in good, if not perfect, health in order that they stay well and that the business of the day can be completed to everyone's satisfaction.

Background Knowledge

If you are planning a trip to an unfamiliar destination it is essential that you acquaint yourself with some basic facts which will be important for your physical as well as your mental health.

Travel Plans

Fortunately nowadays the vast majority of those making your travel arrangements are very aware that maintaining your physical and mental health is good for business. This means that they will do all in their power to ensure that your connections are booked to run smoothly and that the hotel is up to standard. Nevertheless, it must be expected that much of the illness contracted overseas is caused by misfortune or our own foolishness. Being prepared in business includes watching out for your health at all times. Some of the more common problems are covered in the sections which follow.

Voltages

Check out the voltage of your destination and make certain that your electrical appliances will work. Battery razors may be better if you intend travelling to different destinations.

Local Customs

Check out the local customs; alcohol acceptability, state of dress, expressions and phrases etc. Don't unintentionally insult your business colleagues. Talk to colleagues who may have been there before and listen to their advice.

First Aid Kit

Carry a small personal first aid kit. Personal items and simple medications may not be available out of business hours. A thermometer, some panadol, a few plasters and your favourite 'flu remedy are essential items for your first aid kit. Remember also to carry a supply of medication for both diarrhoea and nausea.

Food Supply

Watch out for health problems which can occur very easily. Always watch your diet. Stick to hot freshly cooked foods and never indulge in any of the under cooked shell fish dishes (eg mussels, oysters, clams etc). Lettuce may also be easily contaminated and is better left alone. Don't be swayed by others to eat food that you know to be unwise. Have your own sensible guidelines and stick with them at all times.

Water Supply

The water supply in many of the large cities will be perfect but it is generally wise to check for a chlorine smell before you drink the tap water or use it for brushing your teeth. Ice cubes may also be made from untreated water and are probably best avoided. Another common cause for trouble stems from drinking 'freshly squeezed' fruit juices. The supply may often have been topped up from the nearest tap.

Alcohol, Smoking & Overeating

On business trips it is very easy to be wined and dined each evening. Over eating with limited exercise will cause your health to suffer in the long run. Never drink too much alcohol as this will

compromise you in a number of significant ways. Don't purchase 200 packets of cigarettes in duty free.

Surviving Long Haul

Long haul travel and the ability to cover vast distances by air in a short period of time can have serious detrimental effects on the business traveller. Sitting for prolonged periods can give rise to blood clots in the legs. Remember to walk about the plane occasionally. Sleep patterns tend to be severely affected during long-haul travel. The air cabin staff appear with meals and drinks at times when your internal biorhythms are encouraging sleep. The lack of exercise, body tiredness, excess alcohol, dry recycled air and large alterations in time zones can all mount up to create a very disoriented traveller; one who may possibly make poor business decisions.

Basic rules of long haul travel

- ❑ Leave your watch set at its original time and behave as though you normally would relative to your watch, until your flight finally lands. (Remember to check the local time frequently or you may miss vital travel connections!)
- ❑ Avoid excessive eating and drinking too much alcohol.
- ❑ Exercise at regular intervals to keep the blood circulating. The swollen feet of many travellers is due to the lack of exercise and the thin air within the cabin. Even simple muscle tone exercises while sitting in your seat will help
- ❑ An aspirin the night before and the morning of a long haul flight may be a wise precaution against blood clots (especially in females on the contraceptive pill) unless there is a particular contraindication
- ❑ Take plenty of decarbonated fluids. The air conditioning within the plane, and the fact that the pressure is set at approximately 7000' above sea level, will cause you to become dehydrated. Forget the alcohol and stick to plenty of decarbonated drinks. The extra fluid will help to lessen the dull headache which is so often experienced during and after long haul flights.
- ❑ Take sufficient rest when you reach your destination. If you have travelled across many time zones your body will take time to adjust. In fact, one of the commonly accepted figures is that for every time zone crossed, the body requires 24 hours to fully adjust. This means that when flying from London to Bangkok (7 hours ahead of GMT) your body will take up to seven days to acclimatise fully. Many business trips are for only 4 or 5 days and so before you have fully settled you are heading back home again. It is little wonder that the body complains!
- ❑ A good general rule is to take at least 24 hours at both ends of your journey to allow your body some respite. Your mind will be clearer and, hopefully, so will your decisions. Booking a return flight to arrive home on a Friday is sensible.

Vaccines & Malaria

Apart from the standard vaccines, cover against Influenza is recommended each year if you will have a number of long-haul flights. Business trips are usually to main capital cities but if you have the opportunity to travel around the country you will need to be careful as you may place yourself at significant risk of malaria and other very serious diseases. Even 24 hours in a risk region can lead to infection. Check out the situation before leaving home if at all possible.

Summary

Staying healthy as a business traveller will require some extra care and commonsense. Remember that you will require your body to stay healthy for quite a while ~ so take care to look after it properly at this stage.

Further information regarding the health risks for the business traveller overseas can be obtained by contacting any of our centres or through www.tmb.ie

National Travel Vaccine Appointment Tel 1-850-48 76 74

Web Address: www.tmb.ie

This leaflet has been prepared using information supplied from W.H.O. Center for Disease Control (US) and other International sources.

- ✓ Travel Accessories *business/TMB/update29Aug06*
- ✓ Tropical Diagnostic Laboratory
- ✓ Tropical Disease Screening Centre
- ✓ W.H.O. registered Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre
- ✓ International Vaccination and Malaria Advice Centres

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