

Take Care in Whilst on Holiday

Accidents and injuries account for a significant number of health problems for travellers abroad.

Most deaths in travellers relate to what they do rather than what they catch.

Up to a third of all reported medical cases are due to avoidable accidents.

All travellers should take out health insurance to cover accidents as well as illness and should check that emergency repatriation expenses are covered.

The Pentlands Medical Centre

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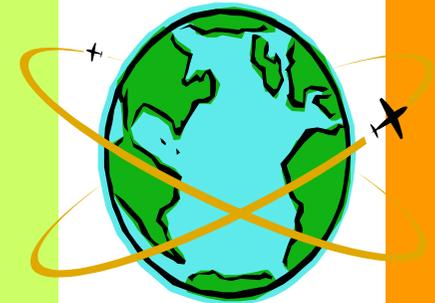
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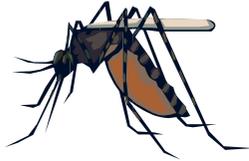
The Pentlands
Medical
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**Travel
Information
Leaflet**



Insect bites

Insect bites usually produce multiple itchy bumps a few millimetres in diameter. You may ease the symptoms by using an antihistamine cream or tablets. Common antihistamines are "Piriton" (chlorpheniramine), "Clarityn" (Loratadine) and "Zirtek" (Cetirizine). Be careful if you are driving - some medicines may make you feel drowsy.



Alcohol

The risk of an accident occurring is exacerbated by alcohol. It is easy to drink too much alcohol in a hot climate. Locally brewed drinks are often stronger

Medicines

Obviously, remember to take plenty of medicine with you, taking into account possible delays. Remember that the cargo hold of the plane may be cold enough to have a detrimental effect on your medicine - including insulin for diabetics. It may be better to keep your medicine in your hand luggage and keep it with you at all times. Paracetamol is very, very useful if you need it - particularly if you have children! You may wish to take a supply of "Calpol" (paracetamol) with you "just in case".

Take Care in the sun

First of all, try not to get burnt at all! Prevention is all important in the case of sunburn. There is clear evidence that sun exposure can increase the chance of developing cancerous lesions, including "Malignant Melanoma". This may be even more important when children become sunburnt.

- Avoid going out in the midday sun.
- Use a high protection factor (30+) sun screen, applied thickly and re-applied regularly. Pay particular attention to the tops of the ears, "mask" area of face, nose, shoulders. Re-apply if going into water etc. Remember sunblock for lips and glasses for eyes.
- Cover up with a hat and clothing - bear in mind that a thin shirt may not provide full protection and you may still need to cover completely with sun screen. Children and babies are at a particular risk.
- Keep in the shade - but remember that you may still burn - including on cloudy days!
- Drink plenty of fluids. Water is best. Avoid alcohol, because it is a diuretic. This means that alcohol will stimulate your kidneys to produce urine - so you may lose more water from the body if you drink alcohol (it's not a very good way of rehydrating yourself!). If you drink alcohol, remember to drink plenty of water to overcome the diuretic effect.



If you have already burnt, then there are a few things you can do to make yourself comfortable.

- Drink lots of water to rehydrate.
- Calamine lotion can be soothing when applied to the skin. An antihistamine cream may help.
- Because the skin's surface is red and the fine vessels in the skin are dilated, there may be several consequences. First you may evaporate fluid (this is why you need fluids) and second, you could lose your body heat and become very cold.
- Remember that, if severe, sunburn can actually be very dangerous - particularly in the elderly and very young. If the patient becomes very drowsy or listless or your own common sense tells you that they are very unwell, then do not hesitate to see a Doctor.

Holidays in the UK

Remember that you have access to an NHS GP wherever you are in the UK. Simply contact the nearest GP (even if you need a Doctor out of hours) and he may look after you as a "Temporary Resident". If you have unexpectedly run out of tablets, you may be able to get an emergency supply from the chemist if you take the empty packets and identification along with you.