

TRAVEL with EASe Newsletter

January 2019

Our topic this month is Be Prepared - it's half the challenge.

The saying goes – being prepared is half the challenge. Here are some tips that will help you be prepared for your next vacation.

Write things out. Make a list of your health issues in case of an emergency. Document health conditions, emergency contacts, medications, allergies, your health insurance, and your travel itinerary. Keep it on your phone and print a copy just in case. Plus, if you are traveling outside the United States, know the number to call in the event of an emergency; it isn't 911 outside the US.

Medical Coverage. Some credit cards and insurance plans may assist with emergency costs. If you have a preexisting condition or are concerned, consider getting travel insurance. This can assist you if you need to visit the doctor or emergency room in a foreign country or get you home if more intensive treatment is needed. Also, most medical insurance will not cover you outside the United States. Check with your medical insurance company to find out. If you have a preexisting condition most companies require you to book the insurance at the same time as you book your trip.

Check things out online. Go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Travelers' Health site (cdc.gov/travel) for information about your destination. Going abroad, sign up for the US Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (step.state.gov) which will keep you informed about safety conditions and send alerts about the country you are traveling to.

Germs. Traveling will expose you to germs you are not used to. The best thing to do is wash your hands frequently with soap and make sure to dry your hands thoroughly. Make sure you're up-to-date on your vaccinations. Some countries require shots prior to arrival, so watch the timing. You want to give some shots a few weeks to be effective.

Move. Any time you are sitting for longer than four hours try to get up, stretch, move around.

Eat/Drink Carefully. The most common travel ailment is travelers' diarrhea. It can happen when you eat or drink contaminated water. If you're in a country with questionable sanitation, avoid street food, no ice in your drinks and keep bottled water with you for brushing your teeth and washing your face.

If you're on vacation and you are not feeling well. Take symptoms seriously. For minor illnesses, rest, water and over the counter medication will work. If a bout of diarrhea lasts more than two days, you have a fever over 101° F for more than a couple of days, see a doctor.

If you are in the United States, call the number on your insurance card to find a doctor in your network. If you need to, head to an urgent care clinic for minor issues.

If you are abroad and in a large city, look for a university teaching hospital. It will likely conform to international health standards and employ English-speaking staff. You can also talk to the person at the front desk of your hotel. They often have a local physician they work with and will contact him/her on your behalf.

Being ill does not have to ruin your vacation. You may have to change your expectations; do smaller activities rather than one large activity. Look at it as time to spend with your family/friends. Keep a journal about what has happened. It can be fun to read it later. This might also give you the opportunity to connect with family/friends that you might not otherwise have had.

Just chill. Sometimes you will have no choice but to give in. Taking naps, ordering room service and reading a book can be a great way to spend a vacation. I can think of worse.

Things to pack for your health when going on vacation –

- Bandages and antibiotic cream
- Thermometer
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever, headaches and other pains.
- Diarrhea medication
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Anti-itch cream
- Allergy medication
- Prescriptions (Hand carry at least an extra 2-3 days in case of delays.)
(Names on prescriptions must match the name on your passport. You must travel with medications in their bottles with the label on them.)

We've talked about your health while on vacation, how about what to do before we leave on vacation. If you are going outside the United States, the first thing to do is make sure your passport is valid for at least six months past your return date. You can be denied boarding if this is not so. **You** are responsible for making sure

passport requirements, as well as visa requirements, are met. I am telling you this as a heads up. A couple booked a cruise to Japan, Korea, and China and did not have the proper visa for China. They were put off the ship in Korea and had to make their own way home and at their own expense. Travel agents can advise you, cruise lines and tour companies can advise you; however, it is your responsibility to make sure you have proper documentation prior to your departure.

At home, stop your mail. You can go online to usps.com and put your mail on hold. You will be given the option of going to the post office to pick it up once you return or you can have your mail carrier deliver it.

Don't forget to stop your newspapers. Most newspapers give you the option to stop or you can donate the papers you will miss to a local school. You would still pay for the paper if you donate.

If you are going to be gone for a long period of time, consider contacting your local police department and let them know. They will drive by periodically and check on your home while you are gone. Every department varies so check with yours as to how far in advance you must notify them. Can't do this last minute.

It is now time to start packing so let's get the suitcase out.

First, let's get our information on a luggage tag. On your luggage tag put your name, cell phone number, and email address. Do not put your home address on your luggage. Individuals have been known to check out luggage at the airport and then head to your home knowing you are not going to be back for a while and help themselves to your things.

Put a copy of your itinerary in the outside pocket of your suitcase. You do this in case your luggage is lost and they, usually the airlines, will be able to find you easier.

What to pack.

If you are not a frequent traveler, prior to packing your suitcase, take one day and write down everything you use. It will make it easier when you are ready to pack.

In your suitcase, one outfit for every day. My practice is to pack one or two outfits more than I need in case something happens. If you are going to have to dress up for dinner, bring outfits that are interchangeable or ones that you can wear during the day and then dress up slightly. One pair of comfortable walking shoes is a must. A small flashlight and a small battery-operated clock are two other things you might want to bring. There are websites that can give you ideas of what to pack depending on the type of trip you are going on. Other than medication and

documentation, if you forget something, don't worry. Odds are you can buy it where you are going.

Once you have packed your suitcase, and before you close it, take a picture of it. I will write a short note on what is in each suitcase in case it is lost. Also, once you close it, take another picture. Again, in case it is lost. It makes it easier to identify to the baggage agent.

My carry on contains all documentation for the trip, medications, camera, jewelry, change of underwear and lotion. Anything of value should be in your carry on. If flying put a USB charger in as well. Take a picture of the document page of your passport and make a copy of it. Do not put the copy with your passport. In the event you lose your passport for whatever reason, you can visit the local US embassy and get a replacement. I know common sense would tell you not to put the copy with the passport but I have heard of clients losing their passport and saying they weren't told to not to put the copy with the passport.

Wherever you are headed, you're going to have a great time! Pack light if you can; it makes it easier to get around. Remember, you are a visitor in someone else's home/country. Respect the people and places; learn what their customs are, tip accordingly, and try to learn the basics in their language (hello, goodbye and thank you). Even if you mutilate the words, most will appreciate that you tried.

Travel changes us. It gives us an opportunity to learn about another culture and sometimes makes us appreciate home a whole lot more.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us.

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