

## Carrentals.co.uk Family Travel Tips No. 5 – Holiday Health Overseas

Travelling with the family offers a world of shared experiences, whether you're exploring South America or touring around France, but keeping healthy while away is vital for everyone to enjoy the holiday to the full. In the fifth of Carrentals.co.uk Family Active 2007 travel tips, we look at advice for keeping healthy on holiday.

- 1) **Do your research** – When you book your holiday find out which vaccinations, if any, are recommended for the countries you are visiting. It's not recommended to have all of your jabs in one go, so the sooner you find out what is required the easier it will be to schedule in visits to the doctor.
- 2) **EHIC** – from 1 January 2006 the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) replaced the previous E111 form. This entitles you to reduced-cost, and sometimes free, medical treatment that becomes necessary through illness or accident while you're in a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland. The card is valid for three to five years – apply online at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/>
- 3) **First Aid** – Prepare a first aid kit to take with you on holiday, including general items such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, scissors, plasters, eyewash, antiseptic ointment, cotton wool, mosquito repellent, anti-histamine tablets, laxatives and immodium, and any other items you feel your family may require.
- 4) **Be prepared** – Think about the every day medications you take and ensure you have enough to see you through the trip. Items such as asthma inhalers, contraceptive pills, or disposable contact lenses and fluid can be hard, or even impossible, to get in some locations, so plan ahead and ensure you have everything you need.
- 5) **Sensible eating** – In many destinations the standards of food hygiene are as good, if not better, than in the UK. However, for many other locations you should eat with some care. Try to avoid salads and fruit washed in anything other than bottled water – if you can peel the fruit, then do. Be wary of shellfish or meat that isn't cooked properly, and avoid eating from anywhere that looks unhygienic. You should also only drink bottled water – never tap – and avoid ice cubes in drinks. If you do get a

stomach upset drink lots of bottled fluids, particularly water, and get plenty of rest. If symptoms persist see a doctor or pharmacist.

- 6) **Fluid Intake** – In hot countries it's vital that you drink plenty to keep your fluid intake up to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion. Children are particularly at risk, as they don't tolerate high temperatures as well as adults. Look out for infrequent urination, headaches and mood changes with dehydration, while heat exhaustion can involve sweating, dilated pupils, nausea and pale, moist skin. Heat stroke is an even more serious form of dehydration, which occurs if the condition is left untreated and you should seek medical help immediately.
- 7) **Enjoying the Sun** – Wherever you're heading, if it's hot be sure to use plenty of high factor sunscreen – at least SPF 15 for adults and SPF30 for children. If you do get burnt, calamine lotion can help cool the skin, although for serious burns you should consult the doctor.
- 8) **Careful in the Cold** – If you are going to a cold location, be sure to take plenty of thin layers to help prevent the effects of the cold, including hypothermia. Wearing multiple thin layers helps trap in the heat, and be sure to wear a hat and gloves. You should also eat plenty of carbohydrates on a regular basis, keep as active as possible, and avoid nicotine – this thins the blood vessels and can increase the risk of frostbite.

**Disclaimer** - These tips are not exhaustive and are for information only. Carrentals.co.uk can not be held responsible for any losses incurred as a result of acting on any information contained herein. We hope the tips are useful.

Useful websites – [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)