



Home > Articles > Healthy Travel Tips For Any Destination

Healthy Travel Tips for Any Destination

Wherever you go to get away from it all this summer, take these quick-and-easy health tips with you.



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by Susan Hall

From the shore to the mountains, the city to the lake, these pointers for you, your family and your pets will help keep your trip trouble-free.

At the Beach

Banish burns. Sunscreen is a must, no matter where you are. “Choose a product with a minimal rating of SPF 30, ideally with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, which offer superb broad range coverage from harmful UVA and UVB rays,” says Melinda Conroy, a dermatologist in Austin, Texas. “If you do get burned, apply aloe vera lotion or gel, take Tylenol and drink plenty of fluids,” says Dr. Stephen Russell, assistant professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Subdue stings. Run-ins with beach critters, like jellyfish, can put a damper on fun in the sun. “If you get stung, reach for the Tylenol or Motrin to help with the



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pain,” Russell says. “Make a paste with meat tenderizer, which can be found in the spice aisle at the grocery store, and water and apply it to settle the sting.”

Protect your pup. Fido often can't help but lap up ocean water. “Drinking sea water is notorious for causing diarrhea,” says Bernadine Cruz, a veterinarian in Laguna Hills, Calif. “Bring along anti-diarrheal medications recommended by your veterinarian, as well as plain (sugar-free) mini wheat breakfast cereal. The wheat acts as a binding agent, and the pet thinks it is getting a treat.”

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At the Lake

Nix motion sickness: If boat trips turn your stomach, try taking half a Dramamine tablet 30 minutes before boating, Russell recommends. If needed, take another dose once you are on the water.

Get sunscreen smart: “Do not be fooled by the labels on sunscreens claiming that they are ‘waterproof,’” Dr. Conroy says. “These products do offer some water resistance, but you should reapply to dry skin every hour if you are involved in water activities or intense physical exertion to prevent burns.”

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Protect your pup. “Not all dogs can swim, and some can only swim for a limited period of time,” Dr. Cruz says. If your pup loves to paddle, keep an eye out for fatigue, and invest in a [dog lifejacket](#) to make things easier on Rover.

In the Mountains

Relieve rashes: If you run into poison ivy, do not use topical Benadryl, which can cause the rash to spread, Russell says. Instead, “calamine lotion and over the counter topical steroids like hydrocortisone and Cortaid can be helpful,” he says. As a rule, dogs are typically not bothered by poison oak and ivy, but cuddling up to affected fur can incite a reaction in humans, says Cruz.

Banish bugs: Disease-carrying insects like mosquitoes and ticks are out in full force, thanks to a mild winter. Apply a repellent, like [Off! Botanicals Spritz](#) before you hit the woods, and check yourself after each outing for ticks and other pests. Treat pets with topical tick preventive, like [K9 Advantix](#), which kills ticks on contact, and groom them as soon as you leave the woods—or do a tick check every few hours if you’re camping, according to the [University of Rhode Island](#)

TickEncounter Resource Center.

Protect your pup. It's tempting to let your dog high tail it down trails, but "keep your pet on a leash in unfamiliar territory," says Cruz. "Wildlife may look intriguing, but can cause injuries or harbor disease-carrying parasites. There are numerous toxic snakes in the U.S., and an altercation can have deadly or at least extremely expensive consequences."

In the City

Fight jet-lag. If you're visiting a city in a different time zone, lower jet lag's effects by staying up until bedtime in the new time zone and taking 1 to 3 mg of melatonin, which can help reset your biologic clock, before bed, Russell says. Melatonin is a natural hormone, and can be found over the counter.

Stay safe from city sun. "Sunscreen saturated towelettes are a great option for travel," Conroy says. "They are neat, fit nicely into a purse or sack, and can be very discreetly applied." And remember to reapply every two hours, she says.

Protect your pup. If Scruffy is joining you in the city, it's

a good idea to map out your trip with his needs in mind. “I recommend [Traveling with your pet: AAA PetBook](#) to my clients,” Cruz says. “It gives tips on how to find pet-friendly hotels, parks, restaurants, pet hospitals, and boarding facilities.

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