

# Keep Your Vacation Free from Stress and Sickness

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Picture this:

You and your family finally take off on your much anticipated summer vacation. The weather is perfect, everyone is getting along, the accommodations are exactly what you'd hoped they would be. You're all ready to relax and have fun, when suddenly—sickness strikes.

It could be a child catching a stomach bug, someone getting too much sun or injured. Any of these unexpected ailments can put a damper on the best-laid vacation plans.

Do these examples sound familiar?

Unfortunately, it's likely that they do. In contrast to the time and effort that often goes into planning vacation travel logistics and activities, many people neglect to plan for a health event that has the potential to ruin an otherwise. A recent national survey commissioned by Teladoc estimates that **132 million Americans have fallen ill while on vacation, and nearly one in two Americans (45 percent) report that they or someone they were traveling with has needed to see a medical professional while traveling.** According to Kelton, the company that conducted the survey, this number represents millions of cancelled plans, vacation days wasted and money lost; not to mention a whole lot of stress and disappointment.

And losing vacation days to illness really gets people hot under the collar. Our survey also reveals that some people would prefer sitting through a timeshare sales presentation, or even sharing a bathroom with a stranger, to getting sick on a getaway. Still, while nearly a quarter of Americans worry about getting sick on vacation, many are leaving home without the essentials:

- **Unprepared Travelers.** Over two-thirds (68 percent) of Americans don't typically bring preventative health care items with them when traveling for vacation.
- **It's Not on Me.** While more than 31 million fret that they won't have access to health care if they do get sick while on vacation (13 percent), a significant majority (82 percent) don't always bring their doctor's contact information or health insurance card (53 percent) with them.

- **Unfamiliar Territory.** Lack of awareness would impact health care decisions for many, including not knowing where to go if an illness happened (42 percent), not knowing a trustworthy medical professional in the area (40 percent), and not knowing if it would be covered by their insurance (34 percent).

Though it's easy to dismiss the possibility that an unforeseen illness could steal the sunshine from your trip, it's important to be prepared. Here are few tips to try to keep your vacation sickness-free:

- Always remember to pack your health insurance card. If it's an active trip, take a photo of your card on your phone for safe keeping, or put all your essentials in a waterproof bag if you're planning to hit the lake or beach.
- Incorporate a healthy dose of physical activity into your trip plans and bring plenty of water along. Staying active and well hydrated energizes your body and keeps it functioning properly.
- Keep travel-sized sunscreen with you and reapply throughout the day. Extreme sunburns constitute 17 percent of medical conditions that require Americans to press pause on their vacation and see a medical professional.
- All roads lead back to washing your hands with soap and warm water. If this isn't possible, make sure you have disinfectant wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. More than one-third of Americans surveyed reported needing medical attention for cold or flu symptoms. Prevent these common conditions by wiping down germ areas and keeping your hands clean.
- And remember, make sure you're registered with Teladoc's service, so you can have a trusted health care resource wherever you go, whenever you need it. Our physicians are available 24/7/365 via phone, mobile device, or secure video and internet.

Vacations are all about building memories and having fun. Pack with your health in mind, and enjoy the vacation you deserve. Bon Voyage!

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