

# Healthy Holiday, Happy Family Guide



Top tips to protect your family against holiday  
illness in the UK and Europe

# Holiday Health Hazards

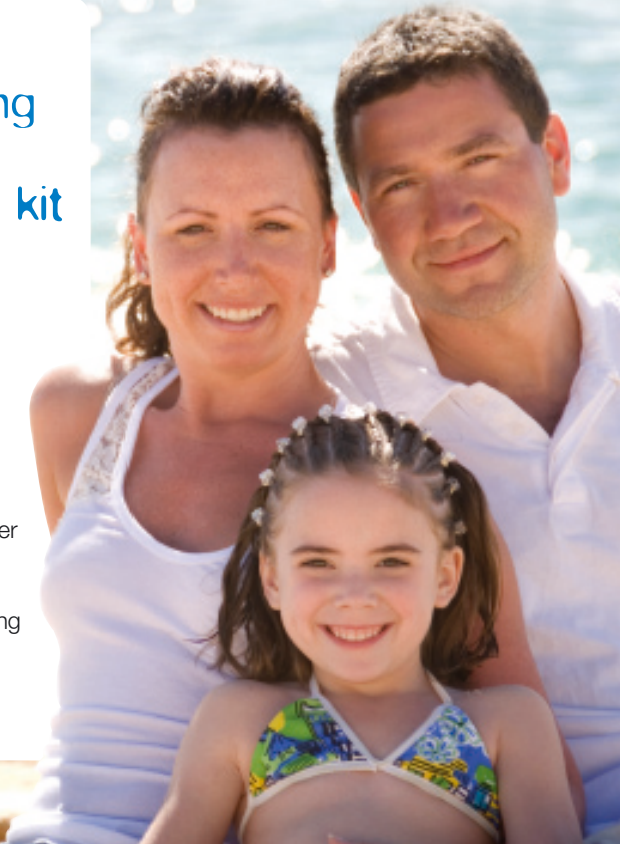
Summer holidays are fun, relaxing and a chance to spend some quality time with the family. However, there are many holiday health hazards that threaten to put a dampener on things, but fortunately they can easily be avoided or treated with some simple preventative steps and essential first aid products.

## ! Top Holiday Health Hazards

- Food Poisoning/ Diarrhoea
- Dehydration
- Travel Sickness
- Eye Infection
- Sun Stroke
- Sunburn
- Insect Bites
- Jet Lag

Don't leave home without the following essential items in your travel first aid kit

- ✓ Pain killers
- ✓ Oral rehydration therapy
- ✓ Insect repellent
- ✓ Topical antihistamine
- ✓ Eye drops
- ✓ Sun protection lotion SPF 30 or higher
- ✓ Aftersun lotion
- ✓ Antiseptic cream, plasters and dressing
- ✓ Don't forget to pack your regular medication



# Ease the sneeze

Hayfever can put a real dampener on summer fun causing sneezing, nasal congestion, and nasal discharge, as well as itchy, red, puffy and watery eyes. Children under seven are not normally affected but older children and teenagers are more susceptible to allergies than adults.

The hayfever season peaks in March through to September. Tree pollens, which affect 25 per cent of hayfever sufferers, appear in March to May. Grass pollens peak from May to July, while fungal spores appear slightly later and last through September.



## Tips for coping with hayfever

- Wear sunglasses when you are outside to help prevent pollens entering the eye
- Don't rub your eyes if they are irritated as this can make them sore and potentially cause an infection if your fingers are dirty
- Wear goggles when swimming to protect eyes from further irritation
- Check pollen forecasts and if the count is high try to avoid outdoor activities
- Try to keep windows and doors shut during the pollen season to prevent spores from entering the house
- Wash your hair frequently to remove pollen particles
- If you or anyone in your family suffers from hayfever make sure you take your usual medicine away on holiday with you



# Tummy Troubles and the Dreaded Diarrhoea

After sunburn, diarrhoea is the second most common cause of illness while on holiday. A case of the runs, where you pass frequent, loose and watery stools, can really disrupt your holiday fun. Diarrhoea happens when the lining of the gut becomes inflamed or irritated, caused by a virus or bacteria, and is usually accompanied by tummy pains and vomiting.

## Key causes of diarrhoea include:

### Food poisoning

With all-you-can-eat buffets and tempting new cuisines to try on holiday, it's easy to forget the hidden dangers that food can hold, from undercooked meat and eggs to inadequate kitchen hygiene.



### Contaminated water

While you may remember not to drink tap water when overseas, many people forget that tap water is also used for making ice cubes, washing salads and fruit and in some cases making ice-cream.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

30% of people have had their summer holiday ruined by diarrhoea

## Preventing upset stomachs on holiday

- Avoid tap water and only drink sealed bottled or sterilised water
- Avoid ice in your drinks
- Only eat fruit that you can peel
- Avoid salad and raw vegetables
- Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing a nappy to avoid spreading viruses from person to person



# Dehydration Dangers

Diarrhoea and sickness can quickly cause the body to lose essential fluids and mineral salts, leading to dehydration. This can be a particular problem for babies and young children, especially with the added dehydrating effect of hot climates abroad, and must be dealt with quickly.

## Spotting dehydration

Seek medical advice immediately if you notice that your baby or child:

- Has not wet any nappies for six hours or has wet fewer than six nappies in a 24-hour period
- Has persistent dark yellow urine
- Has less energy or is less playful than usual
- Has a sunken fontanelle (soft spot on top of head)
- Has a dry, sticky mouth and lips
- A good way of telling if your baby is dehydrated is to lightly pinch the skin on the back of their hand. If the skin stays up it means they might be dehydrated

*Rehydration drinks that contain a mix of salts and sugar help the body replace fluids and essential salts lost through diarrhoea. They do not stop the diarrhoea, but they can prevent your child getting dehydrated.*



Have fun in the sun, but be careful not to overdo it. Regularly apply high factor sun protection and take breaks to seek shade and cover up. Help prevent sun stroke by drinking lots of water, to keep cool and hydrated.

## Treating dehydration

- Offer your child food if they feel like eating
- If you are breastfeeding, continue as usual. Bottle-fed babies can continue with their usual formula milk
- Make sure your child keeps drinking fluids by offering plenty of water
- Sugary drinks like fruit juice and squash can increase the risk of a child becoming dehydrated. Rehydration drinks (also called **oral rehydration therapies**) such as **Dioralyte** and **Dioralyte Relief** work well to **treat dehydration**. Always read the label
- If symptoms persist seek medical advice



# Don't let the bugs bite

## Tips to prevent and treat insect bites from Dr Jane Zuckerman, Royal Free Travel Health Centre

- Be careful when sitting near to flowers where insects are likely to gather
- Bright clothing, perfume and aftershave can attract insects, if you are prone to bites try and avoid wearing them
- Cover arms and legs with long, loose-sleeved clothing to avoid mosquito and midge bites
- Avoid areas of stagnant water
- Teach children to recognise and avoid hazardous plants such as nettles and hogweed
- If you do get stung by nettles, try not to scratch the rash. The best thing to do is to apply a topical antihistamine to the affected area
- Try and encourage children to stay away from stray cats and dogs as they may have fleas and may bite
- If you are stung by a bee, gently remove the sting with tweezers or fingernails and apply a topical antihistamine to soothe the pain
- A sting in the mouth or near the eye can be serious, so immediate medical attention should be sought
- Never scratch a bite as it is likely to become inflamed and possibly infected
- Remember if there is any inflammation or increased pain in the 48 hours following a bite or sting, always seek medical advice



### Allergic Reactions

Anyone who develops a serious allergic reaction needs urgent medical attention. This allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis or anaphylactic shock. A person having a reaction will have some or all of these symptoms:

- red, blotchy skin
- swelling of the face and neck
- difficulty in breathing
- rapid pulse
- swollen lips and eyes
- itchiness all over
- a rash
- fainting
- severe anxiety
- vomiting and diarrhoea

**DID YOU KNOW?**

UK holiday makers suffer an average of 8 insect bites per holiday





# Staying at home?

Risks might be higher abroad, but here in the UK we have our fair share of summer nasties who can wreak havoc with our summer fun.

## Top UK upset stomach risks

- Undercooked red meat and chicken from a barbecue
- Buffets at summer parties and weddings where food is left out for long periods of time
- Large events where the host is not used to catering for lots of people and food is likely to be served before it is properly cooked
- Ice served in drinks. A recent survey of pubs showed that almost half of ice was contaminated with dangerous bacteria



## Summer Bugging

### **Biting insects that are common in the UK include:**

midges, gnats, mosquitoes, flies, fleas, mites, ticks, and bedbugs.

**Stinging insects** most common in the UK are wasps, bees and hornets. The sting is due to venom, which the insect 'injects' into the skin.

**Stinging nettles** can put a downer on a country hike or picnic. They are present throughout the summer in moist areas near creeks, damp woods, and sometimes in the garden if conditions are favourable.



# Your holiday first aid kit

## Anthisan Bite and

**Sting Cream** is a topical antihistamine and contains an ingredient called mepyramine maleate which helps to reduce pain, inflammation and irritation after being bitten or stung. For best results should be applied immediately. Suitable for adults and children from 2 years and above.



**Dioralyte** has been available for over 20 years and is the best selling oral rehydration therapy, with a tried and trusted formula. Available in three flavours; citrus, blackcurrant and natural (unflavoured), Dioralyte is formulated to replace lost water and body salts quickly and efficiently. Suitable for adults and children of all ages. Infants under the age of 2 years with diarrhoea should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible.

**Dioralyte Relief**, has the same fast acting rehydrating action as standard Dioralyte but also contains rice powder which helps to solidify stools, return bowel movements to normal and so reduce the duration of diarrhoea. Dioralyte Relief is sugar free, and is available in blackcurrant or raspberry flavours. In a taste test children preferred **Dioralyte Relief Blackcurrant** over Dioralyte Blackcurrant Standard making it ideal for families.

## Opticrom Allergy Eye Drops

can bring fast-acting relief to the symptoms of seasonal allergic conjunctivitis, which causes itchy, red, puffy and watery eyes. The active ingredient sodium cromoglicate, which works by reducing allergic responses, can soothe irritated and watery eyes in as little as two minutes.



## Nasacort Allergy Nasal Spray

treats the familiar symptoms of sneezing, itchiness, nasal congestion, and nasal discharge. The thixotropic properties of Nasacort, which cause the product to thicken when sprayed to ensure it stays where it is sprayed and reduces the likelihood of it running down the back of the throat.



For more information please contact **01202 780558**

Always read the label

This guide is intended to provide tips on common holiday illnesses. For further advice ask your GP. Or contact Royal Free Travel Health Centre Tel: 44 20 7830 2885 [www.travelclinicroyalfree.com](http://www.travelclinicroyalfree.com)