

Traveller Information Sheets



Infant / Children Travellers

Travelling with children can be very enjoyable, but poses some problems;

1. Their ears may cause them discomfort on takeoff and landing – caused by an inability to equalize the pressure inside the eustachian tube, there are some tips that may give assistance;
 - a. Earplanes can be helpful in reducing ear pain on takeoff and landing. These can be purchased from this travel clinic.
 - b. Providing children with a drink of water in a sippy cup or bottle, depending on their age, or breastfeeding during take-off and landing may help to equalize the pressure in their ears.
 - c. Teaching older children to swallow, yawn, or tense the muscles in their throat to unblock their ears and decrease the pressure in their ears.
 - d. The valsalva manoeuvre, which involves blocking both nostrils and breathing out in short bursts against the closed nostrils, can release the pressure inside the eustachian tubes.
2. Children and infants may dehydrate more quickly than an adult especially in tropical countries. Careful attention to fluid intake and urine output in children and infants will assist with maintaining a good level of hydration.
3. Very new born babies do not have well developed lungs; air travel may pose some risks. It is recommended that infants under 48 hours of age should not travel.
4. Distraction activities can help with long haul flights for children. Activities such as a colouring in book use of interactive media – such as ipads or iPods, with various “apps” downloaded, favourite snacks, story books, loom bands – depending on the age of the child can all provide entertainment and distraction during long flights.

There are age limits on certain vaccinations. Consultations should be made 6-8 weeks before travel.

References

World Health Organisation, 2014, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 9th April 2014 <http://www.who.int/ith/precautions/medical_conditions/en/>

Machado R, 1998, *handling those Middle Ear Problems*, Flight Training, viewed 12th April 2014, <http://flighttraining.aopa.org/magazine/1998/February/199802_Ear_Ye._Ear_Ye.html>