

# Traveller Information Sheets



## Jet Lag.

Jet lag is a feature of flying long distances east-west or west-east through several time zones causing the travellers routine daily rhythm of activity and sleep to get out of phase. The main symptoms are exhaustion, disorientation, poor concentration, and insomnia, loss of appetite, weakness and headache.

Some factors that will affect the jet lag are; noise of the aircraft, sitting for a prolonged period, lack of sleep during the flight, over-eating and excessive alcohol before and during the flight.

*What should I do before the flight?*

- Three days before you leave,
  - If you are travelling east – go to bed 1-2 hours earlier, and wake 1-2 hours earlier.
  - If you are travelling west – go to bed 1-2 hours later, and wake 1-2 hours later.

*What should I do during the flight?*

- Avoid drinking excessive amounts of alcohol and coffee.
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic drinks especially water.
- Only eat when hungry.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.
- Try to sleep on the longer section of the flight.
- Close the blinds and wear the special eye masks.
- Try to take regular walks around the aircraft and exercise at stops.
- Keep your feet up when resting.
- Use a sleeping tablet for long flights.

*What should I do after the flight?*

- Don't make any important decisions or sign any legal documents the first day.
- Eat meals at the appropriate local time.
- Spend some time in the sun.
- Drink plenty of water, and avoid excess alcohol or caffeine.
- If you are sleepy during the day, take short naps (20–30 minutes) so you can still sleep at night.

*Medication*

According to World Health Organisation (2014) "Melatonin is available in some countries. It is normally sold as a food supplement and therefore is not subject to the same strict control as medications (for example, it has not been approved for use as a medication in the United States, but can be sold as a food supplement). The timing and effective dosage of melatonin have not been fully evaluated and its side-effects, particularly in long-term use, are unknown. Moreover, manufacturing methods are not standardized: the dose per tablet can vary considerably and some harmful compounds may be present. For these reasons, melatonin cannot be recommended." This clinic does not endorse the use of melatonin.

### *References*

Centres for disease control and prevention, 2013, Atlanta GA, viewed 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013, <<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/jet-lag>>

World health Organisation, 2014, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 12<sup>th</sup> April 2014, <[http://www.who.int/ith/mode\\_of\\_travel/jet\\_lag/en/](http://www.who.int/ith/mode_of_travel/jet_lag/en/)>