

Traveller Information Sheets



Travellers' Diarrhoea.

Travellers' diarrhoea is the most common health condition facing travellers. World wide, it is the second leading cause of death in children under 5 years of age.

The most important determinant of risk is the traveller's destination. High-risk destinations are the developing countries of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Travellers' diarrhoea is characterised by stomach cramps, profuse diarrhoea, sometimes with fever and blood in the stool. It is caused by eating contaminated food and drinking contaminated water. A common bacteria called E Coli usually causes the contamination.

The best cure is prevention.

If you develop diarrhoea during travel what should you do?

- Rest if you feel tired.
- Ensure you drink plenty of fluids, especially oral rehydration solutions like Gastrolyte. Rehydration is key to improvement.
- Take anti-diarrhoeal medication if the symptoms are mild and you need to catch a bus or plane.
- Consider taking some specific antibiotics if you have three or more bowel motions, nausea and fever.
- Seek medical advice if you notice blood in the stool, severe abdominal pains or fevers above 38 degrees c.

What would you recommend for travellers to take as a precaution?

- Do not eat food from street vendors.
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat or seafood.
- Avoid eating raw fruit and vegetables – unless they have been peeled by you!
- Travellers may elect to take a gastro-medication pack.

What are the 5 keys to safer foods?

1. Keep clean
2. Separate raw and cooked food
3. Cook thoroughly
4. Keep food at safe temperatures

5. Use safe water and raw materials

The 5 keys to safer foods have been implemented in over 100 countries around the world in response to an increasing amount of poor food handling and preparation related illness.

Reference

Centres for disease control and prevention, 2006, Atlanta GA, viewed 13th April 2014, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/travelersdiarrhea_g.htm>

World Health Organisation, 2012, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 14th April 2014, <<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/5keys/en/>>

World Health Organisation, 2013, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 14th April 2014, <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs330/en/>>