

Staying Healthy While Traveling

Lesson developed by Emily Witters, Elkhart County Indiana (Area X)

ewitters@purdue.edu – (574) 533-0554

Emily Witters

Purdue Extension Elkhart County

17746 County Road 34, Suite E

Goshen, IN 46528-6898

Lesson Overview:

- When it comes to traveling, the excitement tends to take over what we should and shouldn't be doing in order to remain healthy during our time away from home. We begin to think about the new adventures that lie ahead versus what could happen if we don't take care of ourselves in the process. During this lesson, you will learn some tips and tricks on how to start, maintain, and continue a healthy lifestyle while traveling. There may be some ideas that you don't think about when getting ready to travel.

Objectives:

- Define the risks of traveling
- Speak to the benefits of healthy habits while traveling
- Helpful tips/tricks to staying healthy during travel
- Barriers between remaining healthy and traveling

Vision:

- Develop an understanding of how to remain healthy while traveling.

Mission:

- Construct a plan of the steps prior to traveling, during travel, and the return from traveling in order to keep healthy such as healthy eating, hydration, and proper vaccinations.

Common Injuries/Health Risks

- Injury/trauma including violence-related injuries, aquatic injuries, and unintentional injuries
- Illness including malaria, flu, E. coli, traveler's diarrhea, and respiratory infections

Traveling Within the US vs. Outside of the US/Lowering Your Risk

Traveling in the US could be to a different county or across the country. Traveling outside of the US requires having your passport and makes an individual more susceptible to viruses not found in the US such as cholera and diphtheria. It is important to remain up-to-date on vaccines at all ages, especially when traveling outside of the country. Some countries may require a specific vaccine in order to enter due to the level of occurrences of disease.



Pack Smarter, Not Harder

Create a checklist when packing so nothing is forgotten. Pick items that are easy to mix and match. Bring comfortable shoes. Avoid bringing clothes you haven't tried on before. Make sure luggage is sturdy.

Stay Moving

Sitting for a long time can cause muscle cramping. Avoid this by stopping for breaks to stretch, move, or take a walk. This could include swimming in the pool, walking around the hotel/airport, walking to shops, or taking the stairs instead of an elevator or escalator.

Balance is Key

It's okay to splurge when on vacation, but you should still have everything in moderation. Refrain from eating too many refined sugars and highly processed foods. Balance meals with different food groups including fruits and veggies. Be intentional with your food choices. Choose foods that will keep you full and nourished.

Water, Water, Water

It is easy to become dehydrated when traveling especially when flying. Avoid highly caffeinated and alcoholic beverages when flying. Monitor the temperature as that can dehydrate someone as well. Always keep a bottle of water with you or a drink containing electrolytes.



Harsh Sun is No Fun

It is important to protect yourself from harmful UV rays. Stay away from tanning beds in preparation for a vacation. It increases the risk for premature aging, dark spots, melanoma, and wrinkles.

Go With the Adjusted Flow

If changing time zones, start before leaving. Give yourself time when returning to get readjusted. Sleep in a comfortable setting and use melatonin if needed. Sleep while traveling if possible.

First Aid Prep

If you or someone you are with has medical needs that require immediate medication such as diabetes or epilepsy, know where to access those medications at all times. Know where the nearest medical facility is and be prepared with emergency numbers for the area, state, or country you are in. Carry a small first aid kit with you containing bandages, gauze, alcohol cleaning pads, and burn cream.



Going Off the Radar

Try to avoid aisle seats on a plane as it is easier to contract a virus from passersby. Make an effort to visit popular locations at less busy times of the year. Consider other events that could be occurring at the same time. Pre-purchase tickets for parks and attractions. Get up early and adjust meal times to avoid crowds.

Keep Clean

When you travel, you open yourself up to a world of new germs, more than what you would experience in your everyday life. Always wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, check hotel beds for clean sheets and towels, and shower/bathe regularly.



Make It Simple

Plan ahead! Planning allows you to save money or get better deals on travel, stays, and attraction tickets. By saving money on big ticket items, you have the opportunity to spend money on other things. An itinerary helps to lay out a plan for everyone to see and be on the same page.

Take Mental Breaks and Relax

If the purpose of traveling is for a vacation, take the time to plan things that will be mentally stimulating and relaxing at the same time. Take time to reset, explore new places, or go somewhere you love or that interests you, but know yourself and your limits. Similar to mental health, it's important to take time to relax when traveling. It allows your body to catch up allowing your body to react better to your senses and thoughts. Practice mindful breathing techniques and detach yourself from normal routines.

Conclude

If you have feedback, questions, or concerns, please contact your local Health & Human Sciences Extension Educator for more research-based information on how to stay healthy while traveling. Purdue Extension appreciates all input when providing programming. Thank you!

Acknowledgements

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Travelers' health*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Gordon, C. B. (n.d.). *8 food safety tips when traveling abroad*. EatRight.
- *Johns Hopkins Medicine, based in Baltimore, Maryland.* , based in Baltimore, Maryland. (2022, February 28).
- Save this to read later. Send to email 5 Min Read •Health & Wellness. (2022, April 11). *How to stay healthy while traveling: 9 tips for a healthy vacation*. NewYork-Presbyterian.
- *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*. NHMRC. (1970, January 1). Retrieved June 30, 2022, from <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>



IEHA Program Lesson Submission

| | |
|--|--|
| Author(s) Names and Email(s): | Emily Christ (ewitters@purdue.edu) |
| County Where Author(s) Work: | Elkhart |
| Area Where Author(s) Work: | 10 |
| Phone Number of Author(s): | 574-533-0554 |
| Month/Year Materials Created: | 08/2023 |
| Topic Title: | Staying Healthy While Traveling |
| Topic Description: (Information should be researched, educational, approved for use (if you are not the author, seek approval from materials author), and presented in a format that would allow an individual to read, study, and teach to other peers. All copyright issues should be resolved before submission.) | When it comes to traveling, the excitement tends to take over what we should and shouldn't be doing in order to remain healthy during our time away from home. We begin to think about the new adventures that lie ahead versus what could happen if we don't take care of ourselves in the process. During this lesson, you will learn some tips and tricks on how to start, maintain, and continue a healthy lifestyle while traveling. There may be some ideas that you don't think about when getting ready to travel. |
| Short Goal/Objective Statement for Lesson: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Define the risks of traveling ○ Speak to the benefits of healthy habits while traveling ○ Helpful tips/tricks to staying healthy during travel ○ Barriers between remaining healthy and traveling |

It is the policy of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry,

marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue University is an Affirmative Action institution. This material may be available in alternative formats.