

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL WITH KIDS: MAKING IT SAFE AND FUN BY

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You have planned this vacation home (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Korea, Indonesia?) for months. You have travel documents and tickets ready, and have been prepping your children excitedly about the trip. Traveling from the US to Asia usually involves long plane journeys with significant time differences, as well as changes in weather, food and living conditions that may pose health hazards to children. It's wise to be prepared for these eventualities by planning ahead of time and asking your Pediatrician for travel related advice.

FLIGHT PLANNING:

- ☺ Request a bassinet and special in flight assistance when traveling with infants.
- ☺ Choose an itinerary that gives you enough time between connecting flights.
- ☺ Carry foods you know your child will eat. Kids usually hate airline food.
- ☺ Carry a child's regular medications in your hand luggage, including nebulizer.
- ☺ Benadryl can make some kids paradoxically hyperactive, so it's not always advisable.
- ☺ Carry Children's Tylenol and Motrin on hand.
- ☺ Ask your Pediatrician for help if your child usually has travel sickness.
- ☺ Bring books, toys, games etc to keep them entertained en route.
- ☺ It can take a week each way for kids to recover from jet lag.
- ☺ Kids' appetites are usually poor when they are recovering from jet lag!

IMMUNIZATION PLANNING:

- ☺ Ensure your child has the standard recommended age appropriate immunizations.
- ☺ Immunizations can be started at 6 weeks of age.
- ☺ Check with the local doctor regarding availability of specific vaccines in that country.
- ☺ Your child may need to have certain "catch up" shots on returning to the US.
- ☺ Typhoid vaccine is recommended for kids > 2 years traveling to high risk areas.
- ☺ Cholera vaccine is not currently recommended.
- ☺ Yellow fever vaccine is recommended only for travel to certain countries.
- ☺ Meningitis, Rabies and Japanese encephalitis vaccines have specific recommendations.
- ☺ **Influenza vaccine** is now recommended for kids 6 months and older in the winter.
- ☺ **CARRY YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATION RECORD WITH YOU!**

MEDICATION PLANNING:

- ☺ **MALARIA PREVENTION:** Recommended for children weighing >11 kilos.
- ☺ Check to see if you are traveling to an area where malaria is endemic.
- ☺ ***Malaria medicine is taken once a week, starting a week before travel, for the entire duration of the stay abroad, and for 4 weeks after returning from the endemic area.***
- ☺ You may have to request your Pediatrician here in advance for the prescription as the medication may not be readily available.
- ☺ Check with your insurance to see if the medication is covered.

- ☺ Carry all your child's regular medications.
- ☺ Carry a nebulizer (breathing machine for asthma) with voltage adapter.
- ☺ Carry extra nebulizer supplies such as tubing, masks etc on hand.
- ☺ Many Asian countries will sell medications without a Doctor's prescription.
- ☺ Brand names of medications may be different, so you may want to carry your own.
- ☺!! **Be sure you know what medicines your child is allergic to.**
- ☺ Avoid treating your child without a physician's advice, whenever possible.
- ☺ The same symptoms in a different setting may be caused by a different illness.
- ☺ A local doctor will know how to treat common illnesses in that country.
- ☺ Carry your own Pediatrician's contact information in case you want advice.

MALARIA PREVENTION:

- ☺ Avoid outdoor activities after dusk when mosquitoes come out.
- ☺ Use clothes that cover arms and legs.
- ☺ Use mosquito repellent, ceiling fan and screening net at night.
- ☺ An air-conditioned bedroom, if available, is a bonus!
- ☺ Many children develop an allergic reaction to mosquito bites.
- ☺ This is treated with antihistamines and sometimes antibiotics if infected.

OTHER TIPS:

- ☺ Make sure you drink bottled, purified water. Avoid ice.
 - ☺ Brush teeth with clean water.
 - ☺ Avoid eating food from street vendors, and in unhygienic restaurants.
 - ☺ Eat only steaming hot food, avoid buffets.
 - ☺ Fresh tender coconut juice is sterile, and a great source of electrolytes.
 - ☺ Nivea cream mixed with coconut oil works great for diaper rashes!
- ☺ Visit www.cdc.gov for detailed travel related advice.

Despite all the meticulous planning, you may find your trip home an arduous experience due to unexpected travel nightmares, unforeseen illnesses etc. Remember that there are excellent doctors and hospitals in every country, so don't panic if your child does get sick when you are on vacation.

Your children may be unprepared for the plethora of social bonhomie lavished on them, or may find it difficult to adapt to new and different surroundings and faces. But they are remarkably resilient and as long as they stay reasonably healthy, remember to have lots of fun and enjoy that much dreamed of vacation to the best of your ability!

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