

HARMFUL TRAVELING: PROTECT YOUR HEALTH WHILE ON THE ROAD



Traveling is often very stressful; this along with other factors makes travelers more prone to illnesses. There is always a possibility that a traveler will sit next to a sick person. Recently an Atlanta lawyer traveled to Europe and back even though infected with a rare form of tuberculosis.

Dr. Phyllis Kozarsky, an expert on travelers' health, says: "We live in a globally mobile society and people have to understand that your risk is never zero wherever you go and whatever you're doing."

There is always a risk of acquiring illnesses on airplanes, if the traveler is sitting next to or close to somebody who has an illness that may be transmitted through the respiratory route, such as measles or the common cold. On the other hand: "...if you're on a bus, on a train or in a movie theater, or in any confined space for a period of time, you could face the same risk."

Ms. Phyllis Kozarsky said. The main risks for Americans traveling to developing nations fall into three categories: vaccine-preventable diseases, insect-borne diseases, gastrointestinal illnesses, such as diarrhea, which is caused by contaminated food and water.

The truth is nevertheless somewhere else. According to Ms. Kozarsky the major cause of preventable deaths in American travelers are injuries. Another important factor is the long time many travelers spend in the air. According to the Department of Transportation (DOT) statistics, just 73.58 percent of U.S. flights operated on time during the first five months of this year.

There were quite a few terrible delays in past. For example, on June 19 passengers in San Francisco were stuck on the ground on Cathay Pacific Flight CX873 for seven hours. This development will continue as the air traffic increases every year. However, long traveling could be lethal.

A study by the World Health Organization has proved that the risk of developing blood clots doubled after traveling four hours or more. The condition, known as deep vein thrombosis, or DVT, arises when blood flow in the lower extremities slows, leading to the formation of blood clots. If the clot subsequently travels to the lungs, it can lead to pulmonary embolism and death. The main cause of DVT is immobility.

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