Health Advice And Preparation For Travel To Kansas City October 2024

Travel Insurance is advisable for everyone as medical/dental care is extremely expensive in the US. Ensure you choose a policy that suits your personal situation and has adequate cover and always declare all medical conditions.

Vaccinations – we recommend you keep these up to date **–** Influenza, COVID, Tetanus. Possibly Shingrix vaccine for older members to prevent Shingles

Dental care – good idea to have any "dodgy" fillings or teeth attended to in NZ

GP – See your GP in plenty of time before travel to get any issues attended to and to get prescriptions for both regular and "in case" medications such as for asthma exacerbations, urinary tract infection, chest infections, migraines etc.

Also ask your doctor about other issues that you think may be relevant such as cystitis, constipation, preventing periods whilst away if necessary, coping with insomnia, anxiety, stage nerves & with time zone changes etc.

If you are at particular risk for DVT during long flights then discuss this with your doctor

Medications - Ensure you pack adequate supplies of ALL your meds for the whole trip (and a bit longer in case of delays etc.). Keep all medications in the original packaging with the name of the medication and ensure that any prescription meds have your name on the label

Medication list – Get a list of ALL the medications you're taking with you from either the pharmacist/GP/GP practice

First Aid kit – assemble a first aid kit – you may wish to share some things with your roommate.

This may include painkillers such as paracetamol, ibuprofen (check if you're able to take these), antihistamines, throat lozenges, Vocalzones, band aids, hand sanitizer, antibacterial surface wipes, lip balm, sunblock.

Many people find that they have dry eyes and noses/throat passages both during air travel and in air conditioned environments so a saline nasal spray and/or lubricating eye drops can be soothing.

RAT tests – get a supply of these - they are free until 30th September 2024.

M**asks** – get a supply of these - lots of different ones available – pharmacies, on line etc.

General health & vocal health – look after yourselves. Build stamina, get plenty of sleep, take steps to avoid respiratory infections eg. masks, sanitizing, avoiding high risk situations etc.

Some members take immune defence supplements, Blis throat probiotics etc.

Look after your vocal health (see separate advice).

Travelling

Wear loose comfortable clothing with layers to put on and off as temperatures in airports and aircraft can be quite variable.

The aircraft cabin has very low humidity so you can keep your nasal and throat passages moist with a saline nasal spray and also by wearing a mask. Lubricating eye drops can also be soothing if you suffer from dry eyes.

Keep yourself well hydrated – drink lots of water &/or other non-alcoholic non caffeinated drinks. Don't drink much alcohol or caffeinated drinks as they dehydrate you further

Take a water bottle to refill (after security)

The reduced pressure in the aircraft cabin also make you more "gassy" so good idea to avoid carbonated drinks or at least keeping them to a minimum (your fellow travellers will appreciate this!!!)

Use hand sanitizer/surface wipes during travelling to minimize picking up any bugs from surfaces etc

Prevention of blood clots while travelling – Drink water or other non-alcoholic fluids moderately to keep you hydrated. Get up to go to the toilet regularly to keep the leg muscles moving (but keep your seatbelt on whilst sitting in case of unexpected turbulence). Also you can do some leg exercises whilst sitting in your seat Consider wearing some below knee compression socks (flight socks) on the plane. These can be purchased in lots of places including pharmacies, Farmers, Kathmandu etc. These are also very useful when standing on the risers for long periods of time!

If you are at particular risk of developing blood clots, then see your GP who may be able to prescribe some medication such as Clexane (an injection) or tablets such as Warfarin or Rivaroxaban for clot prevention. Discuss this with your GP, NP or Prescribing Pharmacist in plenty of time before you travel

Jet Lag

Your body has its own internal clock, called circadian rhythms. They signal to your body when to stay awake and when to sleep.

Jet lag occurs because your body's internal clock is synced to your original time zone. The more time zones crossed, the more likely you are to experience jet lag and it's often worse travelling east.

Jet lag affects your sleep wake cycle and can also affect hunger and bowel function. People often experience sleep issues, daytime fatigue, an unwell feeling and stomach problems. Although symptoms are temporary, they can take a few days to resolve.

Some steps to reduce the effects of jet lag include

- gradually adjusting your schedule before you leave. If you're traveling east, try going to bed one hour earlier each night for a few days before your trip. And we've been told of an App called Timeshifter which can help prepare ourselves.

- If possible, eat meals closer to the time you'll be eating them during your trip.
- Keeping well hydrated and keeping alcohol & caffeine intake low during travel
- Stay on your new schedule. Set your watch or phone to the new time before you leave. Once you reach your destination, try not to sleep until the local nighttime, no matter how tired you are. Try to time your meals with local mealtimes too.
- Go out in the sunlight in the morning after you arrive in Kansas which will help your body adjust to the new time zone.