**Traveling After 60? Here Are Some Tips for Your Safety**

Many businesspeople continue vigorous travel itineraries as they age. While this may add some extra precautions, there is no reason to give up travel.

**Before you go**

No matter what your age, it is important to check your vaccination record before leaving home. Find out what diseases are present at your destination and make sure you’re protected with the appropriate shots. You may be due for a booster of vaccines received earlier in life. The flu vaccination, additionally, is recommended for anyone voyaging overseas and is especially critical for people over 60.

“Before you leave, consider having a medical and dental checkup,” said Dr. Myles Druckman, Senior VP of Medical Services for International SOS. “Keep your overall health and any chronic problems you have in mind when making travel arrangements.”

Be sure to talk to your doctor about managing any chronic issues including diabetes, incontinence, high blood pressure and arthritis. You should bring extra prescription medication in its original container with you on your trip, as they may not be available abroad.

Here are some quick tips regarding packing your medications:

* Pack an adequate supply as well as extra doses of any medication taken regularly in case your trip is unexpectedly extended;
* Carry all medicines in their original containers;
* Bring along a copy of your prescription;
* Obtain a letter from your doctor verifying that your prescription is medically necessary and intended for your use only;
* If traveling internationally, check that your medicine is not a prohibited import item;
* Talk to International SOS, your doctor, and/or your embassy to assist you with these questions.

Remember that age can sometimes reduce stomach acidity, leaving you more vulnerable to traveler’s diarrhea and other intestinal issues. Bring a medical kit that contains treatment for constipation.

Lastly, know your insurance limitations. Many policies, both private and government sponsored, do not pay for medical service rendered outside of the United States. All international travelers should check their insurance coverage and consider buying supplemental health, or “gap”, insurance policies for their trip.

**Specific Health Problems**

* **Lack of Oxygen**:Both breathlessness and angina can worsen at high altitudes and may become problematic during flights. Talk to your airline in advance because many carriers can arrange for oxygen to be available on your flight.
* **Low Blood Pressure**: People with low blood pressure may suffer aggravated symptoms in hot climates, especially those taking anti-hypertensive or anti-Parkinson medications. Talk to your doctor before choosing a destination.
* **Heart Problems**: Travelers with heart problems should bring along a copy of their cardiogram for reference. It can be difficult to read and interpret a cardiogram without examining a prior record.

**While You Are Away**

Some older people are surprised to find out while traveling that their capacity for walking, climbing, and biking may be reduced. Here are some important tips to stay healthy while abroad:

* The best way to avoid a reduction in physical ability is to maintain a regular exercise program throughout the year, which will benefit your body in countless ways;
* Wear sturdy walking shoes;
* Don’t participate in activities that require a great deal more exertion than what you are used to;
* Be especially careful as you adjust to your new lodgings:
  + New surroundings increase your chance of falling or losing your balance;
  + Be aware that impaired vision and/or hearing can make unfamiliar places confusing (i.e. train stations, airports, and other places where loudspeakers are used on a regular basis);
  + Allow extra time to travel to your gate or station.
* Apply a lotion with SPF 20 before heading out for the day. Senior skin is more prone to sunburn.

There’s no reason to slow down as you get older, but a little additional research and protection goes a long way to making traveling memorable for all the right reasons.

Disclaimer: This information has been developed for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Should you have questions or concerns about any topic described here, please consult your healthcare professional.

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