

# POOR PREPARATION COULD COST BRITISH HOLIDAYMAKERS DEARLY

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## NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS THAT HOLIDAYMAKERS PREPARE FOR UNLIKELY EVENTS BUT FORGET ABOUT THE HEALTH HAZARDS

New research from Johnson & Johnson.MSD has shown that British travellers are more likely to take out insurance against unlikely holiday disasters than to prepare for more common holiday health problems, despite the fact that such ailments can potentially ruin a holiday.

Of the estimated 7 million people who fall ill on holiday each year, 80% of illnesses are stomach related(1). However, research showed that only 40% of people pack an anti-diarrhoeal (2). Conversely 74% of travellers take out travel insurance (predominantly medical) but only 10% actually use it (2).

Although taking out holiday insurance is a vital part of preparing to go abroad, a common ailment such as diarrhoea can result in someone being confined to their room for up to 15% of their holiday (3). This equates to more than two days in a two week break.

### Travel Health Awareness Campaign

In response to these findings Imodium™ is launching a travel health awareness campaign this summer. The campaign aims to educate people about holiday health risk factors, how to avoid them and how to prepare themselves by ensuring they take the right treatments on holiday. As part of this programme, Imodium™ has produced a Passport To Healthy Travel, available free of charge from [www.imodium.co.uk](http://www.imodium.co.uk). Imodium™ will also be targeting UK airports with information and vouchers.

### Diarrhoea on holiday

Travellers' diarrhoea is frequently caused by a bacterial or viral infection, overindulging in rich food or alcohol, increased stress or even just a change in climate. There are several precautions you can take to avoid travellers' diarrhoea. These include:

- Avoid buffets, salads, food from street vendors, peeled fruit and raw vegetables and be cautious of any food that has been left out in the sun.
- Make sure food is properly covered and refrigerated. It's always safer to stick to hot, well cooked food.
- Remember this motto: Boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it!
- Only eat products that have been kept well refrigerated and have not been refrozen.
- Drink bottled, boiled, purified or sterilised water and avoid ice cubes as they are usually made from local water.

If you do suffer from a bout of diarrhoea while away on holiday, treating with Imodium™ will help to return the body's digestive system to normal, which can restore proper absorption of fluids and nutrients into the body. This helps to shorten the diarrhoea attack (4) and reduce its social disruption. It can also help the sufferer feel better more quickly than if they don't treat, allowing them to make the most of their holidays!

Dr Mike Townend, travel health expert and member of the Executive Committee of the British Travel Health Association, comments "Of course, taking out travel insurance is important for when you are travelling abroad. However, travellers also need to prepare themselves better for common holiday health problems such as diarrhoea. They need to remember to pack the correct medication and to take sensible health precautions when eating and drinking abroad."

#### Research

The research also highlighted the following:

• Diarrhoea affects both men and women equally, (44% and 38% men), but women are more likely to pack an anti-diarrhoeal (48% vs 33% men)

• 84% of travel insurance is for medical problems, which would suggest people are concerned about major health risks

• 59% of 16-24 year olds took out travel insurance and were the most likely age group to use it. However, they were one of the least likely groups to take anti-diarrhoeals on holiday with them (39%), but more likely to suffer from travellers' diarrhoea (44%).

Dr Townend continues "There has been much confusion and inconsistency in the past in the advice given to holiday goers about how to treat diarrhoea. An international group of leading gastroenterologists looked at all the evidence for the treatment of acute diarrhoea in otherwise healthy adults and concluded that the first line treatment should be loperamide which helps to stop diarrhoea by slowing down the over-active movement of the gut and hence restoring the normal fluid absorption in the bowel."

Imodium™ Instants\* which contain loperamide are particularly recommended for acute bouts of diarrhoea experienced on holiday or out and about, because they can provide the most convenient relief. They melt on the tongue in seconds without the need for water leaving a pleasant mint aftertaste. They can be taken anytime, anywhere. Imodium™ Instants can stop diarrhoea with one dose and are available in a convenient 6 pack from pharmacies, grocers and supermarkets nationwide.

- ENDS -

For more information about healthy travel you can request a copy of the Passport for Healthy Travel from [www.imodium.co.uk](http://www.imodium.co.uk).

\* Imodium™ Instants contain loperamide. Always read the label.

#### Notes to Editors:

For further information, please contact Tom Mardling or Mel Edrich @ Ozone:

t. 020 7349 6368

e. [tmardling@ozonecomms.co.uk](mailto:tmardling@ozonecomms.co.uk)

(1) J&J MSD Consumer Research 2003

(2) J&J MSD Consumer research 2004

(3) Alison Bond Associates, Research and Data 1995

(4) Wingate D, et al. Guidelines for adults on self-medication for the treatment of acute diarrhoea.

Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics 2001; 15: 773-782

