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## Health Travel Tips



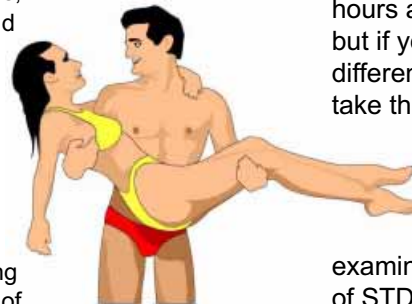
# Safe Sex While On Holiday

## SEX & TRAVELLING

Travellers are at increased risk of acquiring sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, hepatitis B and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which cause the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). It is estimated that 250 million episodes of sexually transmitted infection occurs annually throughout the world. AIDS has been reported for almost all countries in the world.

### Risk factors for STDs include:

- TRAVEL**  
 People behave differently when they travel. Tourists seek new experience and make new friends. Sex is sometimes even the sole purpose of travel for some men.
- NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS**  
 The more sexual partners a person has, the greater the risk of acquiring and passing on STDs. If you have contact with a prostitute, you are especially at high risk of contacting an STD.
- FREQUENCY OF SEXUAL CONTACT**  
 The greater the frequency of sexual contact, the greater the risk of acquiring STDs, e.g. men have 20-35% chance of acquiring gonorrhoea from each contact with an infected partner.
- AGE**  
 The highest incidence of STD has been reported to be from the 15-30 age group. The incidence declines with increasing age.
- CHOICE OF PARTNERS**  
 Partners from high risk groups include intravenous drug users, homosexuals, prostitutes, young people with multiple sex partners and bisexual men.



### Prevention:

- Avoid new sexual contacts e.g. prostitutes (both male & female)
- Avoid multiple sex partners
- Practice safe sex i.e. use condoms, avoid anal intercourse;
- Abstinence is the only completely sure way to avoid STDs/AIDS
- Pack extra contraceptives, especially if you are going somewhere that you are not sure will have condoms easily available.
- See you doctor for emergency postcoital pills cos; condoms have been known to tear at the most unconventional times, like when there is lack of lubrication. So keep a tube of KY jelly or some water-based lubricant handy.
- If you are already on pill, continue taking it according to your old clock, even if you are travelling to a different time zone. If you are travelling somewhere not more than 6 to 8 hours away, there should be no problem, but if you do have to adjust to a big time difference, then it is recommended that you take the pill earlier rather than later.
- If you think that you may have been exposed to STDs, you should cease sexual activity and seek medical examination by a medical practitioner. Symptoms of STDs include vaginal or urethral discharge, an unexplained rash or genital lesion or genital or pelvic pain. Early prompt treatment is essential if the progress of the disease is to be arrested and permanent complications to be avoided. It is always advisable to tell the physician when and where exposure took place.

