

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY

Presented by Dr Peter and Dr Yaron



## Health Tips for Air Travellers

Achy back, sore neck, sniffing nose, pounding head and relentless fatigue: the hallmarks of a just-debarked airplane passenger. Whether you're a frequent flyer or planning your first air excursion, you're susceptible to the physical stress of air travel. As a prevention specialist, Dr Peter and Dr Yaron helps patients prepare their bodies for air travel, and fend off flight related ailments.

### Avert Ache with Adjustments

Visiting a chiropractor prior to your flight is key to a pain-free vacation or business trip. Sitting for hours in a cramped plane seat – and sleeping in a lumpy hotel bed – shift the spine's natural posture. This shift may aggravate a condition called vertebral subluxation – areas in the spine where movement is restricted or bones are out of alignment. This dysfunction is linked with a myriad of ailments, including neck pain, backache and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Dr Peter and Dr Yaron works to correct vertebral subluxations before the onset of symptoms. So, schedule a chiropractic check-up before taking off to keep your spine in top form while travelling. Regular chiropractic care supports optimal spinal health, preventing travel-related pain and fatigue.

The result: more productive and enjoyable journeys.

### Pack Perfect Pillows

Stroll down the aisle of a plane after dark and you'll notice a wide variety of contoured sleep positions – postures that wreak havoc on a traveller's neck and back. But an in-air catnap doesn't have to leave you stiff and sore. To keep your spine aligned while you snooze, invest in a traveller's pillow. These U-shaped pillows cradle the spine, preventing the neck from slouching forward or to the side. (Ask your chiropractor to order a traveller's pillow for you or to recommend a reputable supplier.)

Speaking of pillows, Dr Peter and Dr Yaron also suggests bringing your pillow from home along when you travel. Hotel pillows are often rigid and bulky, and they don't allow for proper neck positioning.

## **Schedule Stretch Sessions**

Frequent stretch breaks are a vital component of a healthy flight. Stretching wards off two flying related ailments: blood clots and muscle soreness.

Approximately one in every two million flyers suffer travel-induced blood clots (thrombosis) which are triggered by prolonged sitting. This number may seem low, but the incidences of this disorder is rocketing. Flight related blood clots are so widespread that in 1995 an international conference was held to discuss the problem, which is also known as “economy class syndrome”, “coach class thrombosis” and “traveller’s thrombosis”.

No matter what you call it, traveller’s thrombosis may have serious implications, including stroke and death. Blood clots usually form during long trips, with 76.5% of cases occurring after a flight lasting at least 12 hours (*Bull Acad Nat Med 1999; 183:985-97*). Traveller’s thrombosis is also more common in passengers with a history of cardiovascular disease.

Research indicates that stretching boosts circulation, which may inhibit the formation of blood clots. Stretching also wards off muscular soreness, another condition provoked by prolonged sitting. According to scientific research, stretching prevents the chemical reactions that create muscle ache.

Remind yourself to stretch by setting a watch alarm for 30 minute intervals. Every half-hour, promenade the aircraft’s aisles, and perform three to five minutes of stretching. (Ask Dr Peter and Dr Yaron to outline an on-board stretch routine.)

## **Launch an Antioxidant Attack**

Air travel exposes flyers to cosmic radiation, which may create disease-causing free radicals and spur cellular changes associated with cancer. In one study, investigators poured over the medical records of 3,877 pilots and cockpit engineers. Cockpit crew members who flew more than 5,000 hours showed an elevated risk of myeloid leukaemia and skin cancer (*Lancet 1999: 354:2029-31*). Researchers also speculate that frequent flying may up the risk of prostate cancer.

In addition to radiation, recirculated airplane air – often teaming with fungus, viruses and bacteria – may also incite disease.

To ward off the hazards of cosmic radiation and recirculated air, fortify your body with natural immune boosters – antioxidants. Take extra antioxidant supplements (such as grape seed extract and vitamins A, C and E) during the two weeks prior to travel, and throughout your journey. (Ask your chiropractor about what doses are right for you.)

While in the air, suck on one of the new antioxidant lozenges available at most health food stores, or spritz your mouth with antioxidant oral spray once every three hours. One especially potent variety of lozenges and oral sprays, which is scheduled to hit the market soon, contains the antioxidant glutathione. A study presented at the Experimental Biology 2000 conference in Atlanta, Georgia, revealed that oral sprays containing glutathione inhibit the flu virus. Specifically, glutathione triggers a chemical reaction that deactivates the enzymes that allow the virus to invade cells in the mouth and throat.

“This could be very helpful, for example, if you were sitting next to someone with the flu on an airplane you could effectively block the infection for a period of several hours,” said Dr. Dean Jones, the study’s lead author.

Garlic is also a potent antioxidant and infection-blocker – but beware that fellow passengers may not appreciate the odiferous quality of your garlic feast!

### **Ditch Unnecessary Drugs**

Alcohol and other drugs provoke jet lag, so skip the in-flight cocktail and avoid air-sickness medication or sleeping pills whenever possible. Instead, consider all-natural nausea remedies, such as ginger capsules and acupressure bracelets. For travel-related insomnia, try melatonin supplements, which help shift your “body clock” so its inline with your destination’s time zone. (As always, check with your chiropractor before initiating any supplement therapy.)

### **Bring Bottled Water**

Adequate hydration deters jet lag, fatigue and illness. Pack a few bottles of spring water in your carry-on, and make sure to guzzle them down during your flight.

### **Be Finicky About Flight Fare**

A prodigious number of scientific studies have verified the medicinal properties of wholesome foods, such as fruits, vegetables, soy, nuts, olive oil, whole grains and fish. In contrast, meals high in sugar, “white” grains, saturated fat and meats aggravate illness. So, request a special health-conscious meal when you book your excursion. Most airlines offer an array of healthy entrees, including vegetarian, low-fat and Mediterranean options. Or, carry a mini-cooler stocked with home cooked cuisine.

### **Take Some Tea**

Tossing several bags of herbal tea into your attaché before boarding can provide many in-air health benefits. First, brews such as ginger, lemon and mint are renowned for their anti-air-sickness properties. In addition, the heat of tea obliterates some viruses and bacteria on contact. Varieties such as green, ginger, rose hip and ginseng also contain immune-boosting antioxidants.