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...serving up a healthy dose of information

## Staying Healthy on Vacation

We all look forward to our summer vacation—but what we often experience along with the thrill of travelling is the agony of illness: Colds, the flu, jet lag, gastrointestinal distress, the list goes on.

How can you protect you and your family from bringing home more than photos and souvenirs? These easy proactive ideas will help you enjoy your well-deserved break from work.

**Rosemary Lemonade.** Rosemary is a versatile herb with many medicinal uses. It increases your circulation—which helps with jet lag, fatigue, mental clarity, and most importantly leg cramps or blood clots from flying long distances. Here's all you need to make your own:

- 1 bunch fresh rosemary, rinsed
- 16 ounce glass jar with a lid
- Lemonade, preferably organic with little added sugar
- Boiling water

Place rosemary in glass jar and fill jar with boiling water. Cover with lid and let sit for 20 minutes. Strain and keep the liquid, discarding the rosemary. Use 1 part strained rosemary water and 1 part lemonade. Enjoy this refreshing summer drink as often as you like.

**Leg cramps, swelling, or blood clots.** Muscle cramps and swelling can be annoying, but blood clots can be very dangerous. This happens because we are sitting for long periods, so blood and lymph collect in our lower legs. To prevent this, every 20 minutes point your toes toward the ceiling and then towards the floor several times. This will use your calf muscles to move blood and lymph up towards your heart. Or if you are able to, get up and walk around the cabin as often as possible.

**Jet lag.** It can take a few days to recover from the changes in time zones when you travel. To help, hydrate well on the plane, drinking lots of water instead of alcohol. Adapt to your new time zone as soon as possible. For example if you fly to Paris and arrive there at breakfast time for locals, even if it is dinner time for you, eat breakfast. Then try to stay up until a normal bedtime -no napping- and avoiding caffeine.

**Melatonin:** this is shown in many studies to help with jetlag, but it is very important to speak with your naturopathic doctor before taking it.

**Gastrointestinal issues:** Constipation and diarrhea often accompany travelers, especially when travelling in underdeveloped regions. Avoid street

## Staying Healthy on Vacation, cont'd

food, peel all fruits and veggies, and drink bottled water. If you are unable to avoid traveler's diarrhea, the BRAT diet is very helpful; bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. The toast should be burned—the charcoal actually helps to calm your stomach.

Enjoy your vacation! And be sure to visit your local naturopathic doctor to help you stay healthy throughout the summer.

**Dr. Susan H. Mueller, Lynnwood, WA**

“If you don't take care of your body, where are you going to live?” ~Unknown



## How Safe Is Your Sunscreen?

Have you ever wondered “What is in sunscreen, and can any of those ingredients be harmful?” Look through this list and compare it to your current sunscreen product to find out:

*Para Amino Benzoic Acid, Octocrylene, Trolamine Salicylate, Menthyl Anthranilate, Sulisobenzone, Homosalate, Phenylbenzimidazole, Dioxybenzone, Padimate O, Cinoxate, Oxybenzone, Avobenzone, Octyl Salicylate, Parabens...*

If you found any of these, it is time to reconsider your sunscreen choice!

With increased sun exposure, it is important to protect your skin; however, a daily amount of natural Vitamin D is very beneficial, providing many health benefits including increased immune function as well as anti-aging properties. I therefore recommend that my patients expose their skin (arms, legs, face) to the sun for 10-15 minutes before any sunscreen is applied.

Many of the ingredients listed above have also been linked to promoting aging of the skin as well as reactivation of certain viruses and cancer. Natural sunscreens use older ingredients such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. Unlike the more toxic ingredients which *absorb* UV rays, zinc oxide and titanium dioxide *reflect* and protect from both UVA and UVB Rays. These healthier choices also do not have the toxicity and damaging effects to the skin and body. Always remember, it is important to reapply often.

With or without protection, lengthy exposures to the sun can result in sunburn. When burns do occur, often peeling, tissue damage and pain are experienced. In order to reduce the inflammation and pain, I recommend Lavender Essential Oil and Aloe Vera Gel topically. These ingredients are both very soothing, hydrating, and help prevent further damage.

*How Safe Is Your Sunscreen?, cont'd*

Another therapy that has been found to be very beneficial is Green Tea, which is a rich antioxidant that may improve the appearance of skin damage from the sun's radiation. Green Tea can be consumed or applied topically to receive the health benefits from it.

Have a healthy summer! It is our pleasure to help support your natural path to lifelong health.

**Dr. Brenden Cochran,**  
Lynnwood, Washington  
Port Angeles, Washington




**Insect Repellent:  
Bad for Bugs, But Bad For People Too?**

Summertime in Alaska is time spent outdoors enjoying the natural resources that make the 49<sup>th</sup> State so iconic. But we're not alone out there. Black flies, no-see-ums, chiggers, and our State Bird (a.k.a., the mosquito) can be a constant nuisance outside, and many people turn to insect repellents for relief.

What is in these repellents, and how safe & effective are they? Time to meet the cast of chemicals in your bug spray.

**DEET** is the most common active ingredient in insect repellent. It was originally developed by the US Army in 1946 for jungle warfare during WWII, but was recently reformulated to increase its period of effectiveness (six hours) and decrease its absorption by the skin. The effectiveness of DEET plateaus at 30% concentration, and many countries have banned products with higher concentrations. DEET may cause allergic skin reactions and there is rare incidence of neurotoxicity. A 2009 study published in BMC Biology demonstrates that DEET inhibits the central nervous system enzyme, acetylcholinesterase, in mammals. Acetylcholinesterase is responsible for inactivating acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that plays a central role in the function of the neurons that *control muscles*.



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*Insect Repellent: Bad for Bugs, But Bad For People Too?, cont'd*

**Icaridin** (a.k.a. Picaridin) is a plant-based repellent used throughout Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. It is colorless, odorless, and has broad efficacy against many varieties of insects. A concentration of 20% is as effective as a 15% concentration of DEET, but doesn't last as long (4 hours). Icaridin does not cause the skin irritation associated with DEET, but note that there are no long-term health risk studies, as Icaridin has only been available since 1998.

**PMD** (a.k.a. Citriodiol, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus) is another plant-based repellent widely used abroad and gaining popularity in the United States. It has a cooling effect on the skin, and smells similar to menthol. PMD is effective against mosquitos, but it has not been studied as a repellent against other insects. A concentration of 60% PMD is as effective as a 30% concentration of DEET, but it must be reapplied every four hours. Skin irritation has been reported in rare cases. Like Icaridin, PMD has only been in use since the late 1990's and so there are no long-term studies on unforeseen health risks; however, Australian aboriginals have used the leaves of the Lemon Eucalyptus plant as an insect repellent for millennia.



It is important that you choose an insect repellent based on the level of protection you need for the specific situation. If insect-borne disease is a significant concern (when traveling abroad, for example), high protection is recommended and the repellents noted above are most effective.

There are herbal repellents available, but the effectiveness of many is an open question. Several herbs that have some preliminary research behind them include citronella, peppermint oil, cedar oil, lemongrass oil, and geranium oil. Despite being weaker than most commercially available insect repellents, frequent reapplication of essential oil-based repellents is not recommended due to reports of skin irritation if applied more than once per hour. However, herbal repellents are useful for infrequent, short use; such as grilling on the porch for 20 minutes.

Take note that there are precautions to take when using any sort of insect repellent, including disuse of aerosol sprays due to the danger of chemical inhalation, avoiding sunscreen/repellent combination products (if you need to use both, apply sunscreen first, then repellent), and be sure to wash off repellent with soap and water when no longer needed.

**Dr. Brian Orr, Seward, AK**

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