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Taking a natural approach to vacationing

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Special To North Shore News

Sunday, June 21, 2009

Whether we venture to a new part of our province or embark on a trip to a distant corner of the world, travelling offers a gamut of new experiences and learning most of us are eager to enjoy.

However, one part of travel preparation that is often overlooked, is how to stay healthy during your trip. Nothing is less enjoyable than getting sick when far away from home and good travel preparation includes addressing this possibility. Whether you are heading to a beach resort in Mexico, are on a driving holiday to the Rockies or off to more exotic destinations, homeopathy can be a source of support both before and during your travels.

While travel clinics suggest a full range of vaccinations and advice for various destinations, not everyone is comfortable getting an armful of shots or may suffer from allergies or side effects to recommended medications. As well, there are plenty of illnesses in other parts of the world that are not covered by available medications and pose a risk to travellers who have no previous exposure. For people who always get sick when travelling or who risk exposure to serious illnesses in the countries they will be visiting, homeopathic remedies offer a safe and low-cost adjunct to health care preparations ahead of the trip as well as effective treatments for health issues which may arise during their travels.

If you are heading somewhere remote, it is a good idea to schedule an appointment with a homeopath who offers travel consultations well ahead of your trip as they can advise you on ways to improve your health and increase your immunity to possible disease exposure before you leave. For all travellers, taking a small kit of homeopathic remedies along can be a godsend to lessen any downtime from commonplace occurrences, such as jet lag, digestive disturbances, sunburn, injuries, or insect bites or stings. The following are several suggestions you may want to consider.

For those crossing different time zones, one product you may want to try is No-Jet-Lag. This is a combination homeopathic remedy that helps keep long distance travellers alert when crossing time zones and resets your internal clock once you have reached your destination. Following the instructions on the package and taking the remedy as advised, you may be able to avoid or shorten the time it takes your body to adapt to a new time zone, and adjust circadian rhythms. Moving more easily into local time will help you sleep through the night and have the energy to absorb and enjoy your new experiences and surroundings.

For people whose systems are particularly sensitive to digestive upsets during travels, here are two good remedies you might want to take along:

Arsenicum album is an excellent remedy for cases of stomach upset, vomiting or diarrhea. Whether one has a digestive disturbance from drinking strange water or come down with actual food poisoning, this remedy can often gently and quickly assist the body to recover. Sometimes just taking a dose at the first twinge of nausea or loose stool can avert a full-blown attack and help you return to balance without further symptoms. For those who do come down with a fuller case of traveller's tummy (nausea, cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and chills), then taking anywhere from three to six doses of Arsenicum 30C over the course of 24-36 hours may help ease the discomfort and support a faster and more complete recovery.

Podophyllum is another remedy to think of, especially if you wake up at 4 or 5 a.m. with acute diarrhea. While Arsenicum often helps conditions that have vomiting as well as diarrhea, Podophyllum addresses more of a diarrhea-only situation. Symptoms that Podophyllum can address may include explosive and profuse diarrhea, either with or without abdominal cramps, lots of gurgling in the abdomen and a painful feeling over the liver area. If you experience any of these symptoms, take several doses of Podophyllum 30C over the course of 24-26 hours to facilitate a return to normal digestive functioning.

While no one ever imagines getting hurt on holiday, in fact accidents and injuries are common occurrences in new and unfamiliar surroundings. One of my favorite homeopathic products is a combination remedy called Traumeel. Available both as a cream to rub over an injured site or as drops to take internally for a more general situation of injury, this product is used frequently in my family of athletes and adventurers, both at home and away. For bruises, strains, sprains and even broken limbs, gently rubbing the cream on the affected area twice a day will quickly diminish the pain and stimulate faster healing. When the injury includes open wounds, broken skin, or is in a place where you cannot easily rub in the cream (such as on the scalp), then take 10 drops of liquid Traumeel three times a day for several days. While all injuries require a period of convalescence, Traumeel will restore comfort and speed up healing time.

Another favorite trauma remedy travellers may want to include is Ledum palustre which is good for any kind of puncture wound, including bites and stings. For those who are susceptible to insect bites, this remedy may help minimize the symptoms. Its primary value, however, is in promoting the healing of any kind of puncture wound and preventing infection from developing. In the event of a cut, wound or bite, practise good wound hygiene and take two doses of Ledum 30C about an hour apart as soon as possible after the injury. Over the next 24-48 hours, depending on the severity of the injury another three-four doses can be administered, especially if the wound is deep, painful or red. Of course if you are severely injured or experience worsening symptoms, take Ledum on your way to the nearest doctor or hospital!

Homeopathy is a medical system that has been extensively practised world-wide for more than 200 years. No-Jet-Lag, Arsenicum album, Podophyllum and Ledum palustre are homeopathic remedies made from plants and Traumeel is a combination of plant and mineral remedies. They are all generally available from health food and natural food stores that sell homeopathic remedies. They are compact to carry and economically priced. Because remedies have gone through a specialized process of dilution and have no other substances mixed with them, they are safe and gentle for all ages, including infants and elderly people.

When travelling through airports, wrap your remedies in two layers of aluminum foil and carry in your hand luggage to protect them from radiation devices and ensure their viability.

As always, if you do become seriously ill or sustain a critical injury, get medical help as soon as possible. Have a safe and healthy trip!

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