

I WAS FLYING BACK from a five-day tour of Iceland when I felt the beginning of a red-hot pimple on my jawline. Then I noticed my back muscles seizing up, and by the time I landed, I also had a tickle in my throat. Acne, pain, and a cold were not the souvenirs I'd planned to bring home—but unfortunately they're all too common. "My patients frequently complain that travel, especially on airplanes, makes them sick," says Holly Phillips, MD, a general internist in New York City and the author of *The Exhaustion Breakthrough*.

Research backs Phillips up: A study in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* found that as many as 21 percent of airline passengers reported developing a cold within a week of traveling. Two-thirds of the respondents to a *Harvard Business Review* survey said trip prep—figuring out transportation, lodging, sightseeing—caused them the most stress, which can suppress the immune system. And a 2015 study found that missing out on sleep, whether it's the result of taking a red-eye or tossing and turning on an unfamiliar mattress, makes you four times more likely to catch a cold. To help you avoid using a sick day to recover, I asked the experts for their best advice.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: SEE YOUR DERMATOLOGIST

Not only can jet lag leave your skin looking pale and sallow, but the change in environment (humidity levels, relative water hardness) and the shake-up in your skincare routine can also take a toll. "Hotel face washes often contain harsh chemicals and fragrances that can cause breakouts or contact dermatitis," says Mona Gohara, MD, an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Yale.

Stay glowing: Before trying to funnel your products into 3.4-ounce bottles or buying travel-size items from the drugstore, ask your dermatologist for samples of your prescription lotions, plus cleanser, moisturizer, and sunscreen. Even if they're different from what you usually use, they'll likely be gentler on your skin than hotel toiletries.

ON THE PLANE: MAKE LIKE A GERMOPHOB

Many people think they come down with the flu after flying because they inhale stale, contaminated air. However, the CDC found that in most newer-model planes, as much as 50 percent of cabin air passes through multiple filters, which capture 99.9 percent of particles, 20 to 30 times per hour. The problem has more to do with armrests, tray tables, and everything else passengers touch, where germs can live for up to a week, according to Auburn University researchers.

Stay healthy: Swipe a disinfectant wipe over your tray table and armrests; before eating or touching your face, wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol.



NATURAL REMEDY

A hangover while traveling, like at any other time, can be caused by dehydration. Prevent getting parched by packing a collapsible bottle and alternating every alcoholic beverage with a glass of water.

IN YOUR SEAT: PLAY WITH A BALL

"If you're sitting down for two or more hours, you're going to get sore, no matter how good your posture or your neck pillow," says chiropractor Scott Burch, president of the American Chiropractic Association's Council on Occupational Health. But if you're proactive, you can minimize your stiffness.

Stay limber: It's best to get up and walk around every hour, but that's usually feasible only if you're next to the aisle. Burch recommends this chair exercise: Place a tennis ball between your back and the seat and shift your torso slightly to roll it around. This will act like a mini-massage to loosen up knots and prevent new ones.

AT RESTAURANTS: EAT LIKE A HEALTHY, FIT LOCAL

Treating yourself is part of the pleasure of traveling (gelato for breakfast, anyone?), but overindulging throughout the trip may lead to GI issues like bloating and constipation, says Kerl Gans, a registered dietitian and the author of *The Small Change Diet*.

Stay satisfied: Gans suggests looking for healthy ingredients prepared in a new-to-you way so meals still feel special. "When I went to France, instead of eating steak frites at every meal, I'd often choose fish with veggies because I know it's lower in calories and high in healthy fats and protein," she says. "I'd order it however the chef recommended, and it was always delicious."

GOING HOME: DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST SUNSET

It's natural to want to extend your vacation for as long as possible, but doing so can mess with your sleep schedule and reverse the relaxing effects of your escape.

Stay energized: If you have to return to work on Monday after a week or more away, come back by Saturday evening, Phillips advises. That way you have two nights to readjust to going to bed and waking up early, which will make you less likely to struggle with temporary insomnia. Healthy travel!