

Surviving This Travel Season

by Dr. Adrian Cohen

(NAPS)—Americans are traveling more than ever. In 2004, an estimated 220 million leisure trips were planned for the fall travel season. International destinations are becoming increasingly popular travel hotspots for a growing number of travelers.

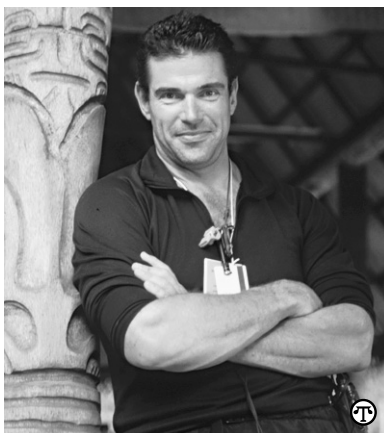
As you prepare for your international adventure be sure to include a visit to a travel health specialist. Less than 10 percent of travelers seek pre-travel health advice according to the International Society of Travel Medicine. Enjoying your trip abroad to the fullest involves making sure you're in good health and taking the right precautions prior to your departure.

What diseases should I be concerned about when traveling abroad?

In the U.S., many deadly diseases have been prevented through vaccination, but this is not the case in the rest of the world. When traveling to an international destination, find out diseases that widely occur in that area. Diseases that commonly affect travelers include traveler's diarrhea, malaria, and vaccine preventable hepatitis (VPH) also referred to as hepatitis A and hepatitis B.

Where am I most at risk for contracting these diseases?

You don't need to visit far-off



Dr. Adrian Cohen, medical director of the CBS' hit show "Survivor," offers tips to outsmart and outfit health concerns this travel season.

places like Palau to contract a serious infectious disease. Talk to your doctor or travel health specialist about diseases that are common to your destination. Dangerous diseases like malaria and VPH are found around the globe including parts of the Caribbean and Mexico.

How do I make sure I'm protected?

A visit to your doctor or a travel medicine specialist at least four to six weeks in advance of your trip is highly recommended. This will allow you enough time for some medicines to take effect if necessary. For vaccination, it is

best to visit your doctor at least 6 months in advance of your travel. If you forget to go until last minute, I suggest you still see your doctor. It might not be too late to get certain medications.

What questions do I need to ask my doctor?

The most important question you can ask your doctor is what health risks you should be aware of. Your doctor can then recommend a medication or vaccination that may be necessary. Two preventive measures I recommend to the Survivor cast and crew are an anti-malarial pill and vaccination for VPH.

I don't need to protect myself if I am staying at a nice hotel, do I?

Yes, you could still be at risk. Malaria is transmitted by the bite of a mosquito, found in many tropical vacation spots. Close person-to-person contact with an infected person or ingesting contaminated food and water can spread hepatitis A. Hepatitis B is transmitted through infected blood and body fluids.

You can avoid contracting a life-threatening illness by following this simple travel health advice. Taking health precautions before you go could save your vacation and may even save your life.

Get more of Dr. Cohen's travel health information at www.travel safely.com.