



Spring Break Health Tips

An NRECA Straight Talk Alert based on info from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control

Spring break—a time for sun, fun, and relaxation. But if there's too much sun and fun, spring break vacation can be an unhealthy experience. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers the following tips to protect you and your children during spring travels.

Sunscreen, sunscreen, sunscreen. Excess sun exposure is especially dangerous for young children. Sunscreen of at least SPF 15 should be applied before venturing out for the day and reapplied after sweating or swimming. Babies younger than six months should be covered completely by clothing and kept in the shade, but you may apply sunscreen to exposed areas like their faces and hands. One note: If you also apply a bug spray containing DEET, it may reduce the effectiveness of the sunscreen by one-third, so reapply more often or reduce your time in the sun.

Reduce travel stress. Changes in children's routines can be upsetting and stressful. Involve your kids in planning the big trip, and bring along favorite toys or stuffed animals for added comfort on the road.

Prepare for air travel. You can't predict whether your child will be fussy on an airplane, but you can reduce their discomfort during ascent. Some children experience ear pain as the plane rises, so chewing or swallowing can help. Have a pacifier ready or plan to nurse your baby, and keep some chewing gum on hand for older children.

Assemble a travel health kit. In addition to basic first-aid items like adhesive bandages, antiseptic, tweezers, aloe gel, anti-itch cream, and hydrocortisone cream, add your regular medications in their original containers, and in quantities to last your trip and then some. Also, bring along remedies for pain or fever, like acetaminophen, aspirin, or ibuprofen; upset stomach or diarrhea; sore throat and stuffy nose, like antihistamines, decongestants, and throat lozenges; and motion sickness.