

water can also occasionally be contaminated. Alcoholic beverages are safe but their presence in mixed drinks does not kill organisms. Hot tea and coffee and hot milk are generally safe.

Diarrhoea

One of the main effects of ingesting contaminated food or water is "the runs." Many types of diarrhoea are noninfectious and self-limited and may arise from changes in food, water or altitude, combined with fatigue and the emotional stresses of departure and arrival. This type of diarrhoea often clears up on a bland diet, with particular avoidance of fats and alcohol. The important factor in treating any diarrhoea is to replace the lost fluids by drinking uncontaminated water, tea, broth, or carbonated beverages. Useful drugs to relieve excessive diarrhoea and cramps include Imodium, Lomotil and Kaopectate. Lomotil is not recommended for young children and may worsen the symptoms of bacillary dysentery. Pepto-Bismol, in doses of one ounce every half-hour until eight doses have been taken, has been found to have a favourable effect on the course of diarrhoea caused by toxigenic *E. coli*, probably the leading cause of travellers' diarrhoea. A physician should be consulted when diarrhoea is severe, accompanied by blood mucus, or fever, or persists for more than three days. One should be particularly careful with infants and small children as they are vulnerable to rapid dehydration.

Schistosomiasis

Where this parasitic disease occurs, all bodies of fresh water must be considered to be infected and all contact with untreated water must be avoided. However, parasites cannot be contracted in salt water or in adequately chlorinated swimming pools.

Sunstroke and Heat Exhaustion

These can be avoided by abstaining from prolonged exposure to the sun or overly strenuous exercise. Be sure to wear a sun hat and loose-fitting, absorbent and light-weight clothing. It is useful to drink more fluids and to add salt to the food or to use salt tablets. Not all suntan lotions are effective and may actually contribute to burns. Perhaps the most effective non-opaque sunscreens are those containing five per cent Para-Aminobenzoic Acid in ethanol.

Insects

Since insects are some of the main carriers of disease, as well as being a great nuisance, windows should be screened. Where this is not possible, mosquito nets may be used. In some places, to avoid being bitten excessively, it is best to stay indoors as much as possible at night or to wear clothing that covers the arms and legs. Insect repellents applied to the skin and on clothing may be of great value. Those containing diethyltoulamide (such as *Off/Skintastic*) are recommended. Air conditioned places are usually free of mosquitos.

Stray Animals

Children should be cautioned not to befriend stray dogs, cats, or other animals overseas. Rabies is a common problem in many countries and street animals are a reservoir of that disease. It is hard to avoid the appeal of cute, obviously underfed, animals, but it must be done.

Flora and Fauna

Children and adults alike should familiarize themselves with poisonous species. Many of the most lethal varieties are the most attractive looking or brightly coloured. Immediate medical attention should be sought for any animal bites or following contact with or ingestion of unknown or poisonous fruit, berries, nuts or plants. Raw shellfish should be avoided altogether in developing countries.