

Splurge - Volume 3 Issue 6 (June 2008)

Article by: Joseph P. Galichia, MD, FACC

Interventional Cardiologist

Galichia Medical Group, PA

316-684-3838 / 800-657-7250

www.galichia.com

HEALTHY TRAVELS

Many of us find it easy to settle into our routine when we are at home or at work. However, what about when we are on vacation, especially in the summer? Part of the wonderful experience of being on vacation is to break routine, and give ourselves a refreshing new look at different surroundings. There are some things that will keep you safe and healthy despite the changes in scenery. Some are so crucial to your health they should be incorporated into your daily life as well.

ROAD TRIP!

AUTO TRAVEL

The classic road trip in the car is iconic, films, movies, and songs have all immortalized the joys and anguish of being on the road. Even with high gas prices, Americans have a passion for exploring that takes us to the highways and byways in droves. There are basic rules, however, that will keep you and your family safer on the journeys.

I am an enormous advocate of seatbelts. Not only is it the law to wear them, but I have seen people on both sides of accidents survive and recover faster after an accident if they wear them. Children and pets should also always be buckled in.

If you are traveling in the car with small children, keep healthy snacks handy (like carrot sticks or apples), and everyone should drink plenty of water. Staying hydrated on the road is incredibly important – and I mean water, not coffee, sodas, or energy drinks. Anything with caffeine can affect you in ways you may not recognize at first, and put you in danger of accidents.

For people in the car with kids, the elderly, or pets, I always suggest taking breaks every two hours. Walking or stretching before resuming the drive helps keep circulation moving, preventing fatigue. If a patient has a history of heart failure or DVT, I suggest stopping every hour. This is also a good time to check in with the other passengers, get a snack, and see how your body is handling the drive. Never, not even for a moment, leave a child in the car alone, especially on high-temperature days. Their constitutions are such that they need extra care in the heat.

Much of what we call “road rage,” is a reaction (or over-reaction) to stress. In order to reduce stress levels on the road, try preparing as far in advance as possible. Have the car checked out before a long drive, make sure the windshield wipers work well, and bring glasses or contacts if you wear them. Many accidents are due to driver fatigue, so be sure to rest well the night before the trip, and avoid alcohol. Another excellent use of modern technology: be sure to have detailed road maps to help plan the vacation that include directions and places to stop along the way.

UP IN THE AIR! FLIGHT HEALTH

Airline travel, as we all know, has changed dramatically over the past few years – what with increased security, longer lines, and destinations that can be accessed more quickly due to increased air traffic. So, some aspects of healthy traveling have changed, but some stay the same for all of us.

Always keep your medication in your purse, briefcase, or carry-on bag. I have known too many times when patients have had problems on a trip because they had packed their medication in their luggage, and the luggage was lost or delayed. Even one missed dose can be an impediment to the process of having fun and feeling your best. If you are leaving for a while, talk to your doctor and pharmacy about refills so that you can continue on your required routine.

If you have a pacemaker, be sure to tell the airline before going through the security process. Many airlines have information posted on-line, or they can give you instructions at the airport about the procedures.

One of physicians' main concerns for patients, particularly those on long, overseas, or cross-country flights, is DVT (deep vein thrombosis). This condition involves blood clot formation in the leg. Though the incidences are low, everyone should be aware of the risk. If you can, move around in your seat, stretch your legs a bit, or stroll to the restroom on a plane, in order to keep circulation flowing throughout the body. Sitting on a plane becomes a risk factor for DVT because the calf muscles don't contract, thus setting the stage for a potentially serious condition. Your risk increases if you have personal history/family history of thrombosis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes; or if you smoke. Airlines are increasingly aware of their customers' health concerns, so check with the specific airline you will be flying, or with your physician for what preventative measure to take.

Vacationing is good for the soul, and relaxed time with friends and family create smiles and happy memories for all of us. My advice: Go out and enjoy this wide, beautiful earth; let's just make sure you are safe as you explore it.

Listen to Dr. Galichia's Radio Show – "Take Your Health to Heart" every Saturday from 11 AM to Noon on 1480 KQAM in Wichita. If you have any medically related questions, please call us during the LIVE broadcast at 1-800-TALK-997 or 1-800-825-5997. You can also e-mail your questions anytime to **GalichiaRadio@Galichia.com**. We would love to hear from you!!!

Also heard in :

Garden City - KIUL - AM 1240

Scott City - KYUL - AM 1310

Guymon, OK - KGYN - AM 1210

Hutchinson - KWBW - AM 1450

Pittsburg - KKOW - AM 860

Parsons - KLKC - AM 1540

Parsons - KLKC - FM 93.5

Coffeyville - KGGF - AM 690

Salina - KFRM - AM 550

www.galichiaradio.com