

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT ON HEALTHY AIR TRAVEL GUIDE:

JET LAG

If you travel by air over a long passage, especially from East to West and vice-versa, your biological clock becomes desynchronized, which causes jet lag problem. Jet lag is hard to avoid, but one way to overcome the problem is to get some shut-eye during the flight, dim the lights and drop your seat back.

If you have chronically stuffy sinuses, it is advisable to bring along a *decongestant* to enable you to breathe properly otherwise you may experience severe sinus pains during flight landing. Swollen feet and ankles are quite common after a long distance flight and it should not cause undue alarm.

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

DVT is a blood clot that forms in the deep veins within the calf and leg muscles. It is a spontaneous condition that normally occurs in travellers, such as those with heart disease or the elderly people.

Recent reported cases of DVT, the so-called *Economy-class syndrome*, mainly due to prolonged immobility after a long distance flight. This is mainly due to the tight sitting position provided for economic class passengers whereby little or restricted movement of legs over a long period of time, thus causing blood clots to the legs or worse of all, to the lungs leading to fatality cases. This had caused much concern to both the long-haul passengers and the airlines industry.

Early warning signs are pain and tenderness in the leg muscles, redness and swelling of the skin. If the blood clot moves to the lung (a pulmonary embolus), breathing difficulties can occur. Such passenger should alert cabin staff immediately and seek medical attention.

Long-haul passengers are advised to take necessary precautions, such as *reduced alcohol consumption during flight, avoid taking sleeping pills, drink more water and take intermittent strolls every few hours*.

Risk factors include those passengers who had undergone major surgery, especially to lower limbs or abdomen, Oestrogen hormone therapy, blood disorders, dehydration, heart failure, varicose veins or family history of DVT.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Most miscarriages occur during the first three months of pregnancy. It is risky to take on a long distance flight. Pregnant women during the last three months' pregnancy should avoid unnecessary medications or vaccinations against anti-malarial drugs unless upon doctor's advice. Women travellers often find that their period become irregular or cease whilst travelling aboard. A missed period need not cause undue worry as this can be determined by a pregnancy test.

Have a "A Pleasant Flight".