

Can Serious Danger Lurk Under The Sun On Your Tropical Vacation?

Contributed by Dorothy Yamich
Wednesday, 18 March 2009

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What can you do to prevent getting a sunburn when you travel to sunny holiday destinations?

In general, the fairer or lighter your skin is, the easier you may sunburn. Even clouds offer little or no protection from a severe sunburn. So why take a chance of ruining your holiday when getting a painful sunburn is easy to protect against? To prevent getting a bad sunburn, especially if you sunburn easily, use a high SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 30, or stronger if possible. Use the sunscreen liberally, wear a wide-brimmed sun hat, choose UVA and UVB protection certified sunglasses, and wear a long-sleeved shirt and slacks. Try to stay out of the sun between noon and three in the afternoon. Build up your exposure to the sun gradually, day by day. Limit the length of time that you spend in the sun to about fifteen minutes the first day, and increase your time in the sun gradually on subsequent days.

What can you do to treat a severe sunburn?

You can ease the pain of a sunburn by soaking in a cool bath three to four times a day. If you add some baking soda to each bath, it will help even more. Cool showers will probably hurt too much, and they are not as effective or soothing as cool, relaxing baths. To help with headaches, or pain and swelling, take aspirin or other pain medication such as Advil or Ibuprofen. Do not take any aspirin based pain medications if you are on blood thinners or have an ulcer. If you are not sure if it's safe for you to take these pain relievers, check with a doctor or medical clinic. To avoid dehydration, drink at least six to eight glasses of water per day. Do not break any blisters if you can help it. Broken blisters can easily get infected, especially in the humid weather of the tropics. If they do break, wash them gently with soap and warm water.

If your sunburn does not appear to be getting better and you still have pain after a couple of days, you develop a high temperature or fever, have a splitting headache that won't go away, are vomiting or have diarrhea, feel dizzy or confused, or your eyes hurt and light bothers them, you must seek medical attention immediately.

What can you do to prevent heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion is completely preventable. Wearing a wide-brimmed sunhat, drinking lots of liquids, and staying out of intense heat and humidity will help you avoid this serious problem.

What should you do if you have the symptoms of heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion is caused by a combination of very high temperatures and humidity. This may result in the loss of fluids from your body through excess sweating. These fluids must be quickly replaced or heat exhaustion can result.

The symptoms include headache, fatigue, lethargy, giddiness, and muscle cramps. The treatment is to immediately move out of the sun or heat and drink plenty of liquids, preferably commercial beverages containing electrolytes, such as Gatorade. Do not drink any alcohol as this will make your condition worse.

If you do not feel better and show positive signs of recovery within a very short period of time, have someone help you get to a hospital immediately as your condition could easily progress into a true medical emergency called heatstroke.

What actions must you immediately take if you get heat stroke?

When heat exhaustion is not successfully treated immediately, it can result in a very serious medical emergency. Heatstroke is characterized by high body temperatures of 102 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit, or 39 to 41 degrees Centigrade. There is also a cessation of sweating. The symptoms of heatstroke include flushed, red skin, headache and confusion which can progress into delirium and convulsions, and can be fatal.

Note: Someone must help you by quickly taking you out of the sun or heat and rushing you to a hospital immediately.

Dorothy Yamich has a passion for travel. She has lived and traveled extensively throughout Europe as well as traveled in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean. She is a travel consultant and specializes in luxury cruises as well as vacation packages. To quickly find and book cheap holidays, at the best price possible, every time you feel like traveling, visit [Travel Tips Guide](#), for more information.