

SUN, SEA AND... SORE THROATS!

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While we normally associate colds with the dark days of winter, we can still fall foul of common cold viruses in the summer months, especially with the unreliability of the British weather, regularly fluctuating from bright and hot to grey and cold. Even worse, sore throats and blocked sinuses have a nasty habit of starting as soon as you arrive at your holiday destinations, ready for a well-deserved break in the sun.

What causes a summer cold?

There are around 200 types of virus which can cause a cold making it the most commonly suffered illness worldwide. So wherever you're heading on holiday this year, sore throats and sneezes are sure to already be endemic! But there are a few factors which might increase your risk of getting the summer sniffles…

Air conditioning... it can be such a relief when the temperatures outside are stifling, but may actually help contribute to the spread of the common cold virus.

The lining of the nose is coated with a layer of mucus which protects against infection. As air conditioners extract moisture from the air, they tend to cause drying of the mucus lining and make someone more susceptible to infection. Cooler air may also help viruses to establish themselves, as they develop better in a cold nose.

Long haul flights… appear to pose a much higher cold infection risk! The confined cabin of an aircraft provides the ideal environment for transmitting airborne diseases such as the common cold. With up to 400 potential sources of infection at such close quarters, the chances of the infection being spread via the re-circulated air are relatively high.

According to the Common Cold Centre at Cardiff University, experiments on exposing uninfected volunteers to the common cold infection have shown that the chances of catching a cold are directly related to the length of exposure. As a result, you're more likely to catch a cold on a long-haul flight to the Caribbean than on a short hop to the Meds.

Travel to foreign countries… can actually increase the risk of infection! While it's likely we've been exposed to every common cold virus in our home towns, we're often subjected to a host of new viruses to which we have no immunity at our holiday destination.

Stress… can lower our resistance to infection by suppressing the immune response. With all the worries about insurance, kennels for the pets and home security taking their toll, many psychologists now classify the family holiday as a major source of stress. This can leave us more prone to picking up infections, even though all we really want to do is relax and have fun.

Tips for keeping summer sore throats and sniffles at bay

It is difficult to avoid getting a cold. People carrying the viruses and bacteria that cause the condition are all around us. However, your chances of being infected can be reduced by following a few simple rules…

- • Make sure you wash your hands frequently and thoroughly! The cold virus can survive for a couple of hours on a contaminated surface such as a door handle or telephone, which we can easily pick up and transfer to our nose or mouth if we don't keep clean

- • Don't share food and eating utensils with anyone! This could help to control the spread of colds and other common travel-related infections which have been picked up by your fellow travellers

• Sunbathe in moderation! Exposing yourself to excessive heat and UV rays can have an impact on your immune system, making you more prone to summer colds

• Enjoy the great outdoors! Colds spread in crowded indoor environments, so try to spend more time on the beach or in the countryside to reduce your risk of exposure

• If you do succumb to a virus, take action! Make sure you have a well-stocked travel first aid kit including paracetamol for fever and a medicated throat spray such as Ultra Chloraseptic® for sore throats you pick up along the way. Ultra Chloraseptic® goes straight to the source of pain for fast, effective relief, whenever you travel

Ultra Chloraseptic® Anaesthetic Throat Sprays contain a local anaesthetic to numb the throat, and are available in two great tasting, sugar-free flavours – Cherry and Original Menthol. Both come in pocket-friendly capped bottles for ease of use ‘on the go’, allowing you to tackle your sore throat whenever it strikes – whether at home or on the beach.

Ultra Chloraseptic® Anaesthetic Throat Sprays are available from pharmacy counters in the UK without prescription. Ultra Chloraseptic costs £4.79 with each bottle containing over 30 adult doses. Contains Benzocaine. Always read the label.
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