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SAFETY CIRCULAR

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TO: Fleet

SUBJECT: Travelling – Health - Jet lag: How to handle

Dear Masters,

Seafarers have sometimes to travel a far distance before they reach the final destination, their vessel, which will be their working place for the next months as well as their home.

Before reaching the vessel they travel thousands of miles and this is not only time consuming but often boring as well. Travelling has his consequences especially crossing time zones.

These time zone changes leads to a load on the human body and mind, which cannot be neglected.



Vessel accidents have a number of causes of which one source of trouble is seafarers who had to take command responsibility while still suffering from fatigue due to the phenomena of

JET LAG.

What is jet lag?

Jet lag, also called desynchronization and flight fatigue, is a temporary disorder that causes fatigue, insomnia, and other symptoms as a result of air travel across time zones. It is considered a circadian rhythm sleep disorder, which is a disruption of the internal body clock.

What are other symptoms and signs of jet lag?

Besides fatigue and insomnia, a jet lag sufferer may experience a number of physical and emotional symptoms including anxiety, constipation, diarrhea, confusion, dehydration, headache, irritability, nausea, sweating, coordination problems, dizziness, and even memory loss. Some individuals report additional symptoms, such as heartbeat irregularities and increased susceptibility to illness.

How long does jet lag last?

Recovering from jet lag depends on the number of time zones crossed while traveling. In general, the body will adjust to the new time zone at the rate of one or two time zones per day. For example, if you crossed six time zones, the body will typically adjust to this time change in three to five days.

What are the best ways to cope with jet lag?

There are several home remedies that can help with prevention of jet lag and easier recovery from the symptoms. The following are 10 tips to help during travel to avoid or to minimize the effects of jet lag.

Tip 1: Stay in shape

If you are in good physical condition, stay that way. In other words, long before you embark, continue to exercise, eat right, and get plenty of rest. Your physical stamina and conditioning will enable you to cope better after you land. If you are not physically fit, or have a poor diet, begin shaping up and eating right several weeks before your trip.

Tip 2: Get medical advice

If you have a medical condition that requires monitoring (such as diabetes or heart disease), consult your physician well in advance of your departure to plan a coping strategy that includes medication schedules and doctor's appointments, if necessary, in the destination time zone.

Tip 3: Change your schedule

If your stay in the destination time zone will last more than a few days, begin adjusting your body to the new time zone before you leave. For example, if you are traveling from the U.S. to Europe for a one-month vacation, set your daily routine back an hour or more three to four weeks before departure. Then, set it back another hour the following week and the week after that. Easing into the new schedule gradually in familiar surroundings will save your body the shock of adjusting all at once.

If you are traveling east, try going to sleep earlier and getting up and out into the early morning sun. If traveling west, try to get at least an hour's worth of sunlight as soon as possible after reaching your destination.

Tip 4: Avoid alcohol

Do not drink alcoholic beverages the day before your flight, during your flight, or the day after your flight. These beverages can cause dehydration, disrupt sleeping schedules, and trigger nausea and general discomfort.

Tip 5: Avoid caffeine

Likewise, do not drink caffeinated beverages before, during, or just after the flight. Caffeine can also cause dehydration and disrupt sleeping schedules. What's more, caffeine can jangle your nerves and intensify any travel anxiety you may already be feeling.

Tip 6: Drink water

Drink plenty of water, especially during the flight, to counteract the effects of the dry atmosphere inside the plane. Take your own water aboard the airplane if allowed.

Tip 7: Move around on the plane

While seated during your flight, exercise your legs from time to time. Move them up and down and back and forth. Bend your knees. Stand up and sit down. Every hour or two, get up and walk around. Do not take sleeping pills, and do not nap for more than an hour at a time.

These measures have a twofold purpose. First, they reduce your risk of developing a blood clot in the legs. Research shows that long periods of sitting can slow blood movement in and to the legs, thereby increasing the risk of a clot. The seat is partly to blame. It presses against the veins in the leg, restricting blood flow. Inactivity also plays a role. It decelerates the movement of blood through veins. If a clot forms, it sometimes breaks loose and travels to the lungs (known as pulmonary embolism), lodges in an artery, and inhibits blood flow. The victim may experience pain and breathing problems and cough up blood. If the clot is large, the victim could die. Second, remaining active, even in a small way, revitalizes and refreshes your body, wards off stiffness, and promotes mental and physical acuity which can ease the symptoms of jet lag.

Tip 8: Wear comfortable shoes and clothes

On a long trip, how you feel is more important than how you look. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes. Avoid items that pinch, restrict, or chafe. When selecting your trip outfit, keep in mind the climate in your destination time zone. Dress for your destination.

Tip 9: Check your accommodations

Upon arrival, if you are staying at a hotel, check to see that beds and bathroom facilities are satisfactory and that cooling and heating systems are in good working order.

Tip 10: Adapt to the local schedule

The sooner you adapt to the local schedule, the quicker your body will adjust. Therefore, if you arrive at noon local time (but 6 a.m. your time), eat lunch, not breakfast. During the day, expose your body to sunlight by taking walks or sitting in outdoor cafés. The sunlight will cue your hypothalamus to reduce the production of sleep-inducing melatonin during the day, thereby initiating the process of resetting your internal clock.