

Travel Constipation

Although travel diarrhoea is common amongst holidaymakers, this often depends on which part of the world you travel to. Constipation affects up to 40% of travellers each year and it is just as **unpleasant** as diarrhoea.

There are various different causes of travel constipation. On holiday, people tend not to eat at the times that they usually eat, which is mostly due to time differences and local traditions at the **holiday destination**. Other causes of constipation are jet lag and not getting enough **fluids** and **fibre**. However, one of the most usual causes of travel constipation is “**safe toilet syndrome**”. Safe toilet syndrome is caused by the fact that, on holiday, it is often not possible to use a toilet. Some people just can’t “go” in a “foreign” environment, which may cause a complete stop of **bowel movements**.

Pharmacy customer: Hello, do you speak English?

PTA: Hello. Yes, I do. How may I help you?

I’m going on holiday in a few weeks and I’d like to put together a travel first aid kit.

Certainly! Do you mind me asking a few questions before we get started?

No, not at all. Go ahead.

Are you staying here in Europe or are you travelling to a tropical country or similar?

We’re heading off to southern Italy. Just my husband and I.

Good. Are you travelling by car or plane?

We are travelling by plane.

I see. And will you be travelling around, you know going on **hiking** or biking tours, that kind of thing?

Not really, it’s more relaxing and sight-seeing.

Okay. Are there any **prescription medicines** that you or your husband need to take with you? You know, such as **narcotics** or injectable medication such as insulin?

No, thank goodness!

Certainly! You might also consider taking **insect repellent** and hydrocortisone gel with you to help deal with **midges** and **horse flies**.

Good idea! What else do you recommend?

Well, it’s always good to take anti-diarrhoea medication with you. The usual is loperamide hydrochloride.

What about painkillers? You know: Ibuprofen or Paracetamol?

I was just going to recommend taking medication for headache or fever. You might also consider something for constipation.

Constipation? Really?

Oh, yes. You’d be amazed at the number of people who suffer from travel constipation!

I thought you only got that on transcontinental or transatlantic flights. You know, from sitting down too long or from the dry air in the airplane cabin.

Yes, that is true. But a lot of people get constipated from not getting enough fluids, or not enough fibre.

I see.

I can recommend either this medication with bisacodyl or this one with **sodium** picosulphate.

I’ll take the sodium one, I know it already, thank you!

Here are your purchases. Have a nice trip.

Thank you. If I think of anything else, I’ll drop by. Goodbye.

You are more than welcome. Bye, bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

constipation	Obstipation, Verstopfung
unpleasant	unangenehm
holiday destination	Reiseziel
fluids	Flüssigkeiten
fibre	Ballaststoffe
safe toilet syndrome	Syndrom der sicheren (sauberen) Toilette
Stuhlgänge	
bowel movements	
travel first aid kit	Reiseapotheke
hiking	Wandern
prescription medicines	verschreibungspflichtige Medikamente
narcotics	Betäubungsmittel
insect repellent	Insektenschutzmittel
midges	Mücken
horse flies	Bremsen
painkillers	Schmerzmittel
sodium	Natrium

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