

In-flight illnesses and ailments (and how to avoid them)

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For road warriors, there are not shortage of logistical annoyances when perpetually traveling for work: [jamming all of your stuff into one carry-on](#), trying to make it through the airport as fast as [humanly possible](#), entertaining clients while [dealing with a brutal case of jet lag](#), to name a few. But nothing is worse than getting sick on your trip. Here are a few common ailments that could ruin your flight, and how to deal with them:

1. Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). This ailment — which causes blood clots in deep veins from not moving for long periods — is such a concern for air travelers [Qantas developed an in-flight exercise video](#) to prevent it. Dr. Luis Navarro of the [Vein Treatment Center of New York](#) notes fliers should avoid salty foods, and should walk the aisles, rotate ankles and feet along with flexing toes, and elevate feet 6-12 inches above the heart (awkward but good for you) to stave off DVT as well as fatigue and leg swelling. While not uber fashionable, compression stockings act as an added layer of muscle to assist circulation.

2. Toothaches. Have you ever been excited for your trip, only to feel like knives were stabbing your gums and blood was pouring out your ears as soon as you lifted off the ground? I've been victim to this awful plight. Luckily (I guess) the issue was a loose filling, within which an air pocket had nowhere to go, pressure changes making me feel like my face would explode. Tooth decay or other dental work or issues that can trap air can also be a problem only fixed by seeing a dentist.

3. Aerosinusitis. Aerosinusitis is a fancy word for blinding pain in your face resulting from inflamed membranes in your sinuses due to a difference in air pressure. I've also suffered this one numerous time, once so painful I almost grounded the plane as I thought I needed to be hospitalized. According to Dr. Mona Vand, aka [the Modern Pharmacist](#), aerosinusitis can even cause facial numbness and tingling as it impacts the infraorbital nerve, effecting sensations on the lower eye, cheek and upper lip area. She notes decongestants such as over-the-counter phenylephrine (for mild cases) or Pseudoephed (for severe cases) could treat this problem. Personally, I also use [EarPlanes](#), ear plugs designed for fliers to relieve air pressure discomfort.

4. Vomiting. Yep, I've had this one happen three times (can you believe I fly so much?). According to [Livestrong.com](#), the combination of horizontal and vertical movements in flight can lead to motion sickness. Choosing a seat over the wing for less movement, staying hydrated, eating light, sipping ginger ale and keeping your air vent turned on to keep you cool are a few ways to alleviate the symptoms. Motion sickness medications can also help. Some people swear by placing prescription scopolamine patches on their ears, although I'm partial to acupuncture wristbands, given to me as a gift by a fellow passenger who didn't want me to puke on him.

5. Upper respiratory infections. Many people are susceptible to upper respiratory infections, especially in flight, as the cabin can dry you out. Dr. Louis J. Morledge of [Morledge Medical](#) advises keeping your mucus membranes moist with an over-the-counter saline solution or gel. Squirt before, during and after flight.

6. Jet bloat. There is an [expanding battle against in-flight flatulence](#) — literally — as differentiating pressure within a plane cabin and inside your body can cause intestinal gas to expand, leading to what Dr. David Gruener, co-founder of [NYSurgical](#), calls "jet bloat." He recommends avoiding carbonated beverages and dairy, and taking Gas-X or charcoal capsules. Of course, you [could just wear charcoal lined underwear](#) so nobody knows it was you who cut the cheese.

Jessica Festa is the founder on the solo and offbeat travel blog, [Jessie on a Journey](#), and the online responsible tourism and culture magazine, [Epicure & Culture](#). She's constantly searching for local experiences beyond the guidebook. You can follow her travels on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).