

Have a checkup before you travel

Planning a trip soon? If you plan to be away from home for any length of time, have a dental checkup and necessary treatment before you leave. A checkup is especially important if you'll be traveling in developing countries or in remote areas.

If left to chance, emergency dental care can be uncomfortable, dangerous and expensive. Dental care providers in developing regions may not have the resources, equipment or supplies to take all of the recommended precautions for preventing disease transmission.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Before you travel abroad, ask your dentist if he or she has contacts in dental fraternity groups such as the Academy of Dentistry International, the International College of Dentists or the Pierre Fauchard Academy. The foreign embassy offices in Washington or a local consulate also may be helpful.

The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers, or IAMAT, maintains a network of medical personnel, hospitals and clinics around the world that have agreed to treat IAMAT members in need of care. IAMAT is helpful in referring patients to dentists. Any traveler can belong to IAMAT. There is no membership fee, although a donation is welcome. For more information, visit "www.iamat.org" or contact the organization at 417 Center St., Lewiston, N.Y. 14902, phone 1-716-754-4883, e-mail "info@iamat.org".

The Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures also has a Traveler's Guide to Safe Dental Care, which includes a checklist for safe dental treatment abroad. For more information, visit "www.osap.org".

WHILE YOU'RE ABROAD

If you are traveling in Europe, contact the American Dental Society of Europe. The Society's members, dentists who live and work in Europe, have completed a full-time course of study at a recognized dental school in the United States or



Be prepared for anything, including the need for dental treatment, while on your travel adventure.

Canada. For more information, visit "www.adse.co.uk" or contact the organization at 5A Oriental Road, Woking, Surrey, England, GU22 7AH, phone 011-44-1483-728411.

Many countries have dental associations that can provide referrals. For a list of international dental associations, visit "www.ada.org". The international directories can be found at "www.ada.org/ada/organizations/international.asp".

A dental school in a foreign country also may be an option. For a list of foreign dental schools, check the FDI World Dental Federation Web site; you will find a dental school directory at "www.fdiworldental.org/dentalschools.htm". (The file is in portable document format, for which the free Adobe Acrobat Reader software is necessary.) Dental referrals may be available from the hotel concierge, the American Consulate (see the U.S. Department of State Web site at "travel.state.gov/index.html") or the American Embassy (see "travel.state.gov/links.html" for a list) in the country you are visiting.

The best insurance, however, is to have your teeth in tip-top shape before you depart. ■

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"For the Dental Patient" provides general information on dental treatments and dentistry to dental patients. It is designed to prompt discussion between dentist and patient about treatment options and does not substitute for the dentist's professional assessment based on the individual patient's needs and desires.