



Travel Trouble

Helping Guests Have a Healthy Visit to Shanghai

JET LAG

Travel can be demanding on the body, especially when crossing several time zones. Nothing derails great plans for a visit more quickly than illness or a serious case of jet lag. Here are a few of the most common problems brought on by the rigors of travel and some tips and solutions you can offer your guests (or use yourself).

Humans have biological rhythms, known as circadian rhythms, which are controlled by a biological clock, daily routines, and exposure to light and dark. These affect body temperature, alertness, appetite, hormone secretion, etc. as well as sleep timing. Jet lag, medically known as desynchronization, results from disruption of these circadian rhythms by traveling across multiple time zones. Your rhythms are out of sync with the new time zone, which can result in sleeping problems, fatigue, difficulty focusing, appetite/digestion issues, and irritability. The body will naturally realign with the change, but this generally takes time (1 day per hour is often suggested), which makes short trips over long distances especially challenging.

Fortunately, TCM's focus on rebalancing qi can speed up the process of recovery. Acupuncture is effective in re-establishing your body's balance and decreasing symptoms. Schedule appointments before traveling, as you should come in for treatment soon after arrival. An ideal schedule is three times per week over two weeks. Herbal remedies can also help and a TCM doctor can put together a decoction based on your body's condition and symptoms.

JET LAG TIPS:

- Try to reset your schedule to the new time zone. Avoid napping if possible and expose yourself to the natural light so your body starts to realign. When fatigue hits during the day, try to go for a walk instead of sleeping.
- Eat small, light meals. You may feel hungry at your old times and heavy meals will only worsen digestion problems and disrupt your body's adjustment.
- Skip alcohol (especially bad on flights where it can increase dehydration).
- Plan time for adjustment. Suggest that visitors build a couple days into their trip to adjust and don't try to pack too much activity into the first couple days.

BY DORIS RATHGEBER



DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS

Many of us are all too familiar with ‘travelers’ diarrhea.’ According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year between 20%-50% of international travelers, an estimated 10 million persons, develop diarrhea. Others experience constipation, indigestion, or upset stomach when traveling, due to jet lag, stress, and unfamiliar foods and eating patterns. Take preventative measures by practicing food safety precautions and refraining from overindulging or drastic diet changes. If problems strike, there are some highly effective Chinese herbal medicines to treat these conditions.

DIARRHEA:

香连片 Xiang Lian Pian (four pills three times/day)

CONSTIPATION:

麻仁丸 Ma Ren Wan (ten pills or two capsules each evening; for severe cases it can be taken both in the evening and morning)

GENERAL DIGESTION PROBLEMS:

香砂养胃丸 Xiang Sha Yeng Wei Wen (six pills three times/day after meals)

COLD AND VIRUSES

The strain of travel and close proximity to crowds of strangers makes us more susceptible to viruses when traveling. Visitors coming to Shanghai may be especially vulnerable due to poor air quality and being unaccustomed to the climate here. There are two excellent herbal remedies for common maladies. Get to know these solutions for yourself as well as your guests. If you take them when you first feel symptoms, you can often avoid a prolonged illness.

COLDS:

双黄连口服液 Shuang Huang Lian Kou Fu Ye (one ampule three times/day)

FLU:

抗病毒口服液 Kang Bing Du Kou Fu Ye (one ampule three times/day)

With these tips and resources, you and your guests can enjoy healthy, happy travels!

Doris Rathgeber is a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She founded Body & Soul – Medical Clinics in Shanghai in 2003. Body & Soul has grown to multiple locations across Shanghai, with an interdisciplinary team of TCM and Western medicine practitioners (www.tcm-shanghai.com).

