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- Medical/ Pharmaceuticals

Vacation Forecast: Sun with a Chance of Travellers' Diarrhea, Dehydration and Bed Rest



Vacation Forecast: Sun with a Chance of Travellers' Diarrhea, Dehydration and Bed Rest (CNW Group/Janssen Inc.)

Over 80 per cent of Canadians think bottled water is always safe¹ - a common myth that could land them in the hotel washroom - or worse

TORONTO, Dec. 4, 2013 /CNW/ - Canadians need a 'drink' of reality when planning a healthy vacation. Over 75 per cent of Canadians view travellers' diarrhea as more than a minor inconvenience on vacation;² yet, just over one-quarter are aware that Dukoral[®], the drinkable vaccine available without a prescription except in Quebec, can help prevent the illness,³ according to the results of a new Ipsos Reid survey. The survey reveals that Canadians need to unpack the truth behind common myths related to safe food and water precautions to reduce the risk of contracting travellers' diarrhea on vacation.

"In my practice I hear patients mention misinformation or myths related to the causes of travellers' diarrhea as they prepare for tropical vacations," said Tommy Cheung, pharmacist at Enhanced Care Medical Clinic, a multidisciplinary clinic based in Toronto. "Without learning the truth about food and waterborne illness they're putting themselves at risk for contracting the bacteria that can cause travellers' diarrhea when heading to high-risk destinations like Mexico and the Caribbean."

Despite their best intentions, 98 per cent of travellers may make a dietary or beverage mistake within the first three days of their vacation.⁴ Bacterial enteropathogens, which include enterotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (ETEC) bacteria, are thought to cause the majority (80%) of travellers' diarrhea cases.⁵ Sources of ETEC bacteria can include poorly cooked meat, contaminated raw vegetables, unpasteurized dairy products and, of course, water.⁶ Up to one-in-five vacationers who contract travellers' diarrhea are bed-ridden for an entire day,⁷ and its symptoms can last up to five days.⁸

Unpacking the Truth Behind Common Travel Health Myths

The new survey reveals that Canadians need a healthy dose of the facts when it comes to common food and water myths.

- Eighty-four per cent of Canadians believe that drinking bottled water is always safe.**⁹
Drinking bottled water is generally recommended to cut the risk of consuming ETEC bacteria.¹⁰ But just because water is in a bottle, doesn't mean that it hasn't been filled up at a tap. As a precaution, make sure the bottle is factory-sealed to guarantee that it is safe to drink.¹¹
- Just under a quarter (24%) of Canadians believe that contracting travellers' diarrhea is only a minor inconvenience.**¹²
Travellers' diarrhea is the most common illness affecting Canadian travellers in areas like Central and South America, Mexico, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.¹³ Its symptoms can range from mild to severe, and the severe symptoms can include fever, vomiting, and stools with blood or mucus, which can lead to mild to severe dehydration.¹⁴ Also, having the illness can be costly - both financially and experientially, by missing out on quality vacation time.
- Fifty-nine per cent of Canadians believe that food served at all-inclusive resorts is "safe" for Canadian vacationers to consume.**¹⁵
No food group can be regarded as "safe" from transmitting the bacteria that can cause travellers' diarrhea.¹⁶ Food may stand for several hours at room temperature, allowing bacteria to multiply. It may become contaminated by food handlers or the environment before being consumed.¹⁷ The general rule of thumb is to "cook it, boil it, peel it or leave it" when consuming fruit or vegetables.¹⁸
- Nearly one-in-five (19%) wrongly believe that Canadians of foreign descent are immune to travellers' diarrhea when visiting their country of origin to visit friends or relatives.**¹⁹
Friends and relatives of Canadians who currently live in Central and South America, Mexico, Africa, the Middle East or Asia²⁰ may not be susceptible to bacteria causing travellers' diarrhea. This is because local populations are generally immune due to long-term exposure,²¹ which is rapidly lost when not exposed. Travellers' diarrhea can affect people of any age, race, or gender.²²
- Over half of Canadians were not aware that the risk of contracting travellers' diarrhea when travelling to Mexico**

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is similar to when travelling to Africa.

Travellers' diarrhea most commonly affects people travelling from developed countries to other regions of the world. High risk destinations include countries in Central and South America, Mexico, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.²⁴

"It's extremely important to plan ahead and protect themselves from the risks of travellers' diarrhea and other infectious diseases," said Tommy Cheung. "Canadians should talk to their travel health expert, pharmacist, doctor or healthcare provider for advice. It is not as complicated as many people think. To protect against travellers' diarrhea, for instance, they can get an oral vaccine called Dukoral from their pharmacist. I always remind my patients about the effective timing of taking this two-dose oral vaccination, as the first dose needs to be taken at least two weeks before departure, to reduce their risk of contracting the illness."²⁵

About Travellers' Diarrhea

Travellers' diarrhea is a common medical condition characterized by the sudden onset of symptoms including fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea.²⁵ It affects up to one-half of travellers who visit Mexico, the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, Eastern or Southern Europe during a two-week stay.^{26,27} The condition is caused by bacteria found in contaminated food and/or transmitted by water.²⁸ Bacterial enteropathogens, such as ETEC, are thought to cause approximately 80 per cent of cases.²⁹

About Dukoral®

Dukoral® is an oral, inactivated vaccine indicated for the prevention of and protection against travellers' diarrhea and/or cholera in adults and children two years of age and older who will be visiting areas where there is a risk of contracting travellers' diarrhea caused by ETEC bacteria, or cholera caused by *V. cholerae*.³⁰ Dukoral® induces the body to make antibodies against the bacteria and toxins, strengthening the body's own defense system. The liquid Dukoral® vaccine is added to the mixture of water and the powder that is provided with the vaccine, and is taken orally. Protection from ETEC diarrhea and cholera can be expected about one week after the primary immunization series is completed.³¹ A single booster dose of Dukoral® will renew protection against travellers' diarrhea if the last dose was taken in the preceding three months to five years. A single-dose Dukoral® format is available from a pharmacist, and should be taken at least one week before travelling.³²

Important Safety Information

Dukoral® is intended to help prevent travellers' diarrhea caused by ETEC and/or cholera in adults and children two years of age and older. It does not treat travellers' diarrhea once it develops. Not everyone who gets vaccinated will be fully protected; therefore, precautions to avoid contaminated food or water should be taken. Side effects may include gastrointestinal upsets, such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, and allergic reactions may occur. Please refer to the Dukoral® Product Monograph for additional safety information and for complete prescribing information, available at www.janssen.com.

About Janssen Inc.

As a member of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies, Janssen Inc. is dedicated to addressing and solving the most important unmet medical needs in pain management, psychiatry, oncology, immunology, psoriasis, virology, anemia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, gastroenterology and women's health. Driven by our commitment to the passionate pursuit of science for the benefit of patients, we work together to bring innovative ideas, products and services to patients around the world.

About the "Unpacking the Truth about Travel Myths" Survey

The "Unpacking the Truth about Travel Myths" Survey was conducted by Ipsos Reid to examine experiences and attitudes about travel health and travellers' diarrhea. Funded by Janssen Inc., the data was fielded between October 28 and 31, 2013 and included an online poll of 1,193 Canadians who were asked nine questions. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the survey is accurate to within +/- 3.2 percentage points had all Canadians adults been surveyed.³³

Tommy Cheung was not compensated for participating in media relations related to Dukoral®. He has been a paid consultant to Janssen Inc.

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Video with caption: "Video: Vacation Forecast: Sun with a Chance of Travellers' Diarrhea, Dehydration and Bed Rest".

Video available at: http://stream1.newswire.ca/cgi-bin/playback.cgi?file=20131204_C7438_VIDEO_EN_34351.mp4&posterurl=http://photos.newswire.ca/images/20131204_C7438_PHOTO_EN_34351.jpg&clientName=Janssen%20Inc%2E&caption=Video%3A%20Vacation%20Forecast%3A%20Sun%20with%20a%20Chance%20of%20Travellers%27%20Diarrhea%2C%20Dehydration%20and%20Bed%20Rest&title=Vacation%20Forecast%3A%20Sun%20with%20a%20Chance%20of%20Travellers%27%20Diarrhea%2C%20Dehydration%20and%20Bed%20Rest&headline=Vacation%20Forecast%3A%20Sun%20with%20a%20Chance%20of%20Travellers%27%20Diarrhea%2C%20Dehydration%20and%20Bed%20Rest

Image with caption: "Vacation Forecast: Sun with a Chance of Travellers' Diarrhea, Dehydration and Bed Rest (CNW Group/Janssen Inc.)". Image available at: http://photos.newswire.ca/images/download/20131204_C7438_PHOTO_EN_34350.jpg

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