



# PANAMA COAST TO COAST

Produced by



# Health Advice

Health risks associated with travel are always a balance of risk versus the reward of amazing adventure. This health advice guide offers information across a range of travel topics including medical, wellbeing, environmental, and training support, to help you get the most out of your adventure.

# Travel health

We've included three excellent, always up-to-date sources of generic country advice, which can be used in line with your own medical profile to make an informed decision on things like vaccinations, and anti-malarials. It's worth trialling new medications before your trip to understand the potential side effects and consulting a travel clinic with any specific concerns or questions.

## Travel Health Pro

For travel info, including anti-malarials and travel vaccinations.

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

## Dr fox

Buying travel medication.

<https://www.doctorfox.co.uk/travel-health.html?af=668943>

## foreign travel advice

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>



# First Aid

## Emergency kit

Think ABC - a face shield of some kind for CPR (Airway and Breathing) and a bandage or two for big bleeds (Circulation). Throw in a pair of disposable gloves for your own protection.

## Running repairs

Think something for cleaning, like wound care wipes and savlon, something for patching up, like a roll of plaster tape and/or some Kinesiology tape and some steri strips. A conforming or crepe bandage and a sterile pad and a couple of safety pins gives good flexibility for covering wounds or supporting joints.

## Medications

On top of your normal medications consider adding in an anti-histamine, Imodium and some oral rehydration solution.

For simple pain relief, we would normally recommend paracetamol over ibuprofen, for anything stronger the Trailmed team will be able to help you out.

## Extras

Finally a nice, preferably red, dry bag to keep it all in, to make it easier to find and always ready when you need it. Consider a whistle, some kind of environmental protection (bivvy bag) and spare torch as your all in one emergency go to.

## Skin care

Skin care - A high factor sun cream and lip salve in small enough containers to go in your day bag to allow regular re application during the day. An anti chaffe cream for different parts of your personage depending on how your planing to complete your adventure, well worth trying a few in your training.

# Foot care

## Early Care

**STOP!** - If something is not feeling right, and there are still a number of kilometres to go, fix it now. Don't ignore it any longer. Stop right away and fix it. A slight rub or a loose shoe over many thousand steps is what causes problem. A simple fix can make all the difference.

## Blisters

Foot blisters are the result of friction which can be caused by rubbing of ill-fitting footwear and can be made worse by moisture either from perspiration or external sources.

Here are a few tips to help you prepare for your event:

**Feet** - well-cut toenails, no large patches of hard skin.

**Footwear** - Well fitted, including the socks and any insoles - comfy, not too tight or loose. Socks should ideally be wicking, snug fitting and without bulky seams.

Consider short gaiters in dusty/dry areas to keep debris out of your footwear.

**Training** - Cover plenty of miles and give time for your feet to recover in between sessions. This helps leather boots, in particular, to soften and mould to your feet. Use this time to experiment with different socks and insoles.

Early treatment of hot or sore spots is the easiest way to deal with them:

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Solution</u>
Toes Rubbing	Use a little Vaseline
Hot or Wet day?	Change socks, Dry feet, Use some talcum powder (not with Vaseline)
Heel rubbing?	Re-do your laces and consider using duct-tape over the high rub area.



## Running repairs

**Fluid-filled blister** - If you wish to continue in the event, the blister should be drained by making at least two holes using something sharp and sterile. The site should be dried, and a low-profile dressing applied, possibly with some padding over the blister. In extremis tissue glue can be placed under the roof of the blister as well.

**Burst blister** - Dry and arrange the remainder of the roof before dressing as detailed above. If the roof is bunched, it can be cut away, again with something sharp and sterile.

## Post event

Blisters are open wounds, so rest, keep them clean and sterile, and avoid further trauma and walking. A colloid type dressing can also help to speed up the healing process.



# Travel + Sleep

## Travel

Travel isn't easy on the body, especially when traveling a long way and across different time zones. Naps are not an enemy but rather a tool which can be used to help us cope. Prioritise sleep and use naps as a tool to help adjust to new time zones.

When travelling there is plenty of opportunity to catch unwanted illnesses which can disrupt your performance and your enjoyment of the trip! When travelling, aim to keep good hygiene practices. Wash your hands with soap regularly for at least 40 seconds and always carry anti-bacterial hand gel.

Do not neglect your body when travelling! Stay well fed and hydrated when you travel. Being under-fuelled or dehydrated is not a challenge you want to face right at the start of your adventure.

## Sleep

Following exercise, we all have an increased demand for sleep as our bodies recover from the neural and metabolic stressors of exercise. Consider the following to improve your sleep in the run up to an event:

- We are all creatures of habit. Establish a bedtime routine and follow it regularly. Use sleep hygiene tips such as budgeting 30 minutes for winding down, dim lights and unplug from electronics.
- Prioritise sleep - As an athlete, sleep is your best tool for recovery so make sure you use it!
- One bad sleep won't ruin your performance. Even if you don't have the perfect sleep, your body is still recovering.
- Give yourself the best chance of a good sleep by creating a good sleeping environment which is cool, dark and quiet.

# Nutrition

## the 3 P's



### Practice

Practice makes perfect... well sort of. You cannot approach an event without practicing your fuelling strategy and this goes for pre, during and post exercise fuelling. Practice allows for you to make adjustments to timing, amount and allows your body to get used to exercise fuelling.

### Preparation

Be organised with your fuelling strategy, you are going to need a lot of fuel to get you through the event. Consume mainly whole foods before and after the race and consume a mixture of liquids, solids and gel carbohydrates during the event. Always consider how you can combine your nutrition and hydration strategies.

### Patience

No one nails their fuelling strategy on the first try. Focus on finding a strategy which work for you. Everyone is different and what may work for one person, may not work for you. To learn more about your race-day fuelling it would be worth talking to an expert, like our health and performance partners at [Trailmed](#).



# Hydration

Hydration is often neglected and doing so can have devastating implications for performance. A well thought-out hydration strategy is equally as important as nutritional fuelling.

- Use your urine colour as an indication of hydration status - aiming to maintain good volumes and light colours of urine throughout race-day.
- During exercise, go beyond drinking just water, by adding electrolytes, sugar and a flavouring.
- A handy tool for measuring dehydration is to weigh yourself before and after exercise to calculate water losses. When re-hydrating, aim to consume 1.5L for kg of body weight lost during exercise. Re-hydration takes time, so distribute fluid consumption across the hours post exercise, again, consuming electrolytes and sugar.

Want to learn more about optimising your hydration? Talk to an expert, like our health and performance partners at [Trailmed](#).

# Heat

## top 3

- 1. Dehydration** - In the heat, drinking to thirst is not sufficient to avoid dehydration, therefore, aim to drink to pre-empt thirst. Use your urine colour as an indication of hydration status. Aim to maintain good volumes and light colours of urine.
- 2. Cooling** - Build cooling methods into your race-day strategy. Consider using ice slurries or cold water ingestion (<10 degrees C) to help cooling before and during the race. An alternative is to simply take a break and cool down in a shaded place with a breeze.
- 3. Symptoms** - Tiredness, dizziness, headache, sickness, heat rash, excessively fast breathing or heartbeat, a high temperature, being very thirsty. Sunscreen, hats and sunglasses can help protect you from the harshest of the suns rays

# Altitude >2500m

## FAQ's

Will I notice the altitude?

Above 2500m, most people notice symptoms of altitude including, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, dizziness nausea, vomiting and difficulty sleeping. At altitude, our bodies rapidly adjust and while we will all be effected differently these symptoms settle within a couple of days.

Are there any other things to consider?

At altitude, sunburn and dehydration are prevalent. Grab a bottle of high factor sun cream (children factor 50 is good), a good set of sunglasses. Remember to eat and drink well to make your experience of altitude more enjoyable.

How can I reduce the effects of altitude illness?

- Slow and steady - Just like any experienced high altitude mountaineer everyone should walk at a slower pace at altitude - slow enough to hold a conversation.
- Climb a sensible ascent profile (do not climb too fast)
- Take Acetazolamide (also known as Diamox) if needed. UK GP's may not be familiar with altitude medicine so its worth talking to an expert, like our medical partners at [Trailmed](#).



# Jungle

Exploring the tropics, jungles and rainforests can be some of the most thrilling adventures, however preparation is essential. Jungles are a type of thick dense rainforest, they are hot during the day, incredibly humid and often there are high levels of rainfall.



## CLOTHING

The jungle is exploding with life, with high level of biodiversity and thick vegetation, there are many plants that can cause irritation to the skin. On top of that there are many types of insects and flies that can bite and climb on your belongings. Thus, it is important to keep covered, loose fitting long trousers are advised. Make sure you shake out anything after picking it up from the floor and knock your boots in the morning. High quality insect repellent can really make a difference and in this environment, you want some of the highest levels of repellent available (such as 50% DEET). Gloves are useful for machete work. If using a machete always keep it sheathed when not in use.

## SUN AND RAIN

The rain can be incessant, and you will often get soaked quickly. Have a good system of wet and dry clothing (eg. with dry bags), so you can keep your sleeping kit dry, as it gets quite cool at night. Make sure you install a drip line or water break when using a hammock. Protect yourself from the sun as often the UV index is high in Jungle regions, the best way to do this is to keep covered and use a wide brimmed hat. Dehydration is common as you can lose more than a litre of sweat an hour in some extreme jungle conditions, regular sips is the best way to stay hydrated.

## HYGIENE AND FEET

The jungle is hot and humid, so wounds can get infected easily and foot problems are common. Use boots that are properly fitted and 'walked in', consider jungle boots. Regularly change socks and let your feet dry out when at camp. Gastrointestinal upset is the most common medical issue on expeditions, regular hand washing and use of alcohol gel reduces the risk of infection. Tampons are the recommended period product for women as synthetic pads can easily become irritating in the humidity.

## ANIMALS

Seeing an animal in its natural habitat is one of the most wonderful experiences, travel quietly as being loud may provoke attack. Do not approach or try and handle any animals, do look up as many animals live in the trees. If you get bitten or stung, take a photo of the offender if you can, apply pressure and seek the Trailmed Medic who will be accompanying you in the jungle.

# Training



**Plan** - Well in advance of your event, take time to create a training plan to gradually progress to race fitness. It is important to consider session duration, intensity as well as training frequency. Build from the bottom up and prioritise developing a good aerobic base at the start of your training through frequent, long duration, low intensity training sessions.



**Tailor** - Make sure your training is specific to the demands of your event. Expose your body to a variety of terrains, climbs (descents as well as ascents) and durations which are reflective of the event.



**Tapering** - Trust your training and the work you have put in. Taper your training, reducing training volume by 25% two weeks before the event and a further 15% a week before the event. Aim to keep moving and try to maintain exercise frequency but manage volume by reducing duration and intensity.

## Women in Expedition

Written by Naomi Thompson Taylor - TrailMed Wildernurse

### Toilet Bussiness

Normalise going to the 'toilet' when you need it, you'll quickly lose any embarrassment and men do not care! Be prepared for a casual bout of thrush or cystitis when you're pushing your body, especially in warm weather. Add a single dose of thrush and cystitis treatment to your personal Med kit for more remote environments.

### Periods

Stress and exertion can fox Mother Nature into thinking it's that time of the month at any time of the month. Always carry your preferred items with you. Taking a couple of resealable bags for used items is so handy - you might have to carry any waste with you if you can't safely and ethically dispose of it.

### Washing

Keeping clean is often tricky. Focus on the essential bits - feet, armpits, groin, chest under a sports bra. Moisturise the dry bits, dry the wet bits. Dry skin will split and create wounds. Avoid perfumed soap which can aggravate thrush. Baby wipes (ideally compostable) and resealable bag of talcum powder are ideal.



# Find out more...



At TrailMed, we work with athletes to shape their training, and help them achieve their best when it matters. Regardless of your sport, age, or competitive level, TrailMed can help you get the most out of your training. We offer world-class physiology and nutritional support, with the athlete at the centre of everything we do.



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