

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

Staying Healthy Abroad – Excerpt

June 29, 2006

Nearly half of all visitors to developing countries will get sick during a two-week trip, according to Dr. Phyllis Kozarsky, a travel-health consultant for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But health problems aren't limited to these regions, of course; viruses don't recognize borders, and accidents can and do happen anywhere.

"American travelers tend to think of the world as a giant amusement park—that they can have a wonderful experience with little risk," says Dr. Edward T. Ryan, director of the Travelers' Advice and Immunization

Center at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital. "The reality is that the world is a risky place. A well-informed traveler is most likely to come back healthy."

Many air-ambulance companies do not repatriate patients to hospitals in their home countries but instead transport them to the nearest acceptable medical facility.

However, Global Rescue (www.globalrescue.com) will fly patients to the U.S. hospital of their choice; individual and family policies are available for trips lasting from seven days to one year.