

# **One in four vacations includes a trip to the ER: survey**

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A new national survey by Orlando Health finds 1 in 4 vacations include a trip to the ER. Orlando is not only one of the top tourist destinations in the US, but is home to one of the busiest emergency departments, as well, thanks to a steady flow of sick and injured tourists. Credit: Orlando Health

If you've ever had to seek medical attention for an illness or an injury during a vacation, you're not alone. A new national survey by Orlando Health finds one in four vacations includes a trip to the ER and doctors say many patients are simply not prepared for the situation.

"When you're going on vacation the last thing you want to think about is a [medical emergency](#), but with just a few simple steps, you can rest assured that you will be prepared for any situation" said Steven Corbett, MD, an emergency medicine physician with Dr. P. Phillips Hospital at Orlando Health.

Because it's located in the heart of one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, the [emergency department](#) at which Corbett works is one of the busiest in the country, treating more than 80,000 patients per year. "We really see the gamut," said Corbett. "If you can think it or imagine it, quite honestly, we've seen it."

The facility is so busy, in fact, that it offers overnight accommodations through the Cynthia C. and William E. Perry Pavilion to friends and family who bring in loved ones for emergency care. "We have an entire department that does nothing more than help the families and friends of our patients," said Corbett. "Not only are they welcome to stay here for a per-night donation, but we will ferry them back and forth to their hotels and even pick up their car for them from the theme park where they may have left it."

Corbett says many travelers make the same mistakes when it comes to medical emergencies on vacation, and he offers a few tips to make sure you're prepared for your next trip:

**Don't Force it** - If you are sick or injured before your vacation begins, stay home. "I understand that we only get so many days off throughout the year and we spend a lot of time planning our vacations," said

Corbett, "but I see people every day who think they can manage their conditions only to wind up in the ER, which ruins the trip for everyone involved."

**Carry Your Medical Information with You** - If you are dealing with a medical issue at the time of your trip or if you have a chronic condition, be sure to carry pertinent information with you. "You can store a lot of information on your phone," said Corbett. "Make a list of allergies you might have, take photos of your prescriptions and upload images to your phone like x-rays, MRIs or EKG results. The more information you can provide to us, the more efficiently we can treat you." There is a side note, however: be sure someone else knows how to unlock your phone and retrieve that information. "It's great if you have those things, but it does no good if we can't get to it. Make sure your phone is unlocked and the information is readily available."

**Refill Prescriptions Before You Leave** - One of the most common mistakes people make is that they run out of their medications in the midst of their vacation. Getting a refill in an unfamiliar place can be a challenge and going without your medication is never a good idea, so be sure you have enough to cover the duration of your trip. Also, in case your luggage is lost, be sure to pack all medications in a carry-on bag so you can have it with you at all times.

**Speak Up if You Don't Feel Well** - Corbett says many patients wind up in the emergency department because they didn't speak up when they first started feeling ill. "They don't want to be responsible for ruining everyone else's fun, so they don't just keep quiet," he said. "That can be very dangerous, especially if someone is having symptoms like chest pains or dizziness that can be sign of something serious. So, if something doesn't seem right, speak up immediately."

**Invest in Travel Insurance** - Healthcare is expensive and it's important

to remember that your insurance may not work. Medicare and even some private plans don't cover medical costs outside the United States and the rules for Medicaid can vary by state. Corbett suggests investing in travel insurance, especially if you are traveling out of the country.

**Everything in Moderation** - Perhaps the most common mistake tourists make is simply overdoing it. "They spend too much time in the heat and humidity and get dehydrated, they're on their feet much longer than normal or they go on rides they shouldn't," said Corbett. "I treat hundreds of [patients](#) each year who would never have come to the ER had they only paced themselves." Drinking too much alcohol and overeating are common mistakes as well, especially indulging in exotic foods you're not used to eating.

Provided by Orlando Health

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