

Why holidays can make you sick—examining pre-holiday stress

July 25 2017



Credit: University of Portsmouth

With summer underway and school holidays around the corner, a Portsmouth academic is researching why people get stressed before they go on holiday. Liz Sharples, lecturer in travel and tourism, says that although we look forward to it the whole year, research indicates that we are often worried, stressed and even disappointed as departure approaches.

For her PhD Liz is currently researching the 'experiential journey' that consumers undertake after booking and before starting their [holiday](#). Her research examines the emotions of customers in this stage of the process,

as early research has shown how [people](#) can regret booking their holiday after having often spent hours of their time trying to find the best option.

She says that research indicates in the last few days before the holiday people often find they feel unwell. Women are especially prone to this with forty-four percent of women reporting an increase of stress during the build up to holidays versus 31 percent of men.

Liz said: "Without gender-stereotyping, [research](#) shows that it is often women who are the ones organising the pre-holiday tasks such buying new or essential items, arranging care for pets, tidying-up the house and packing – for everybody! Working women have the pressure of their job as well and the two combined can cause a decline in pre-vacation health and well-being.

"It's not just [women](#) and it can depend on the type of person you are; some people are extremely organised but worry about everything they have to do and some are simply last minute doers but panic because they've left everything too late. It means that people leave for their holiday feeling exhausted instead of buoyant and excited."

Liz's top tips to avoid pre-holiday stress:

DO:

- Do make a 'to do' list – sounds obvious but it can help you to remember the important items.
- Do ask for help. It shouldn't all fall to one person so get the whole family involved.
- If you work then try to ensure you organise your workload a couple of weeks in advance so that you don't need to panic and work even longer hours in the days before you leave.
- Do check climate, visas and health requirements. If you take

tablets, do you have enough?

- Check or arrange travel insurance

DON'T:

- Don't leave the planning to the last minute – get packing early – it takes the pressure off.
- Check your tickets and documents – if there are errors it can affect if you are allowed to travel.
- If you are flying check the airline rules on hand baggage.
- Don' forget to have to have a great time – you are going on holiday so try to build up the excitement and anticipation. Have a fantastic trip!

Provided by University of Portsmouth

Citation: Why holidays can make you sick—examining pre-holiday stress (2017, July 25)
retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-07-holidays-sickexamining-pre-holiday-stress.html>

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