



UNITED
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Wellness Monthly

Healthy matters to keep in mind.

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Are We There Yet? Stress-Free Family Vacations

As the weather improves and temperatures rise, families across the country will pack up and head out on vacation. While planning a trip can be difficult, those traveling with children have an extra chore: making special arrangements to accommodate their little ones' needs. Here are some tips that can make planning a family vacation a little easier.

Air Travel

A Change for the Better:

Changing a baby's diaper in the cramped, closet-like airplane bathroom is a struggle to be avoided at all costs. Putting a fresh diaper on the baby just before getting on the plane will help you avoid changing it while in flight.

Chew On It: While takeoff and landing are exciting for little ones, the pressure change on board may be a bit difficult for them. Make sure you have some sugarless gum or red licorice for them to chew on, which makes the pressurization easier on their ears. Babies can be breastfed, or given a bottle or pacifier.

Time it Right: Try to arrange a flight during your child's happy part of the day, perhaps in the morning before his or her naptime. Then after the excitement of takeoff and a snack on the plane, he or she may be ready for an in-flight nap.

Fill Them Up: If you're traveling with an infant, plan feedings so your baby can be fed on the plane. As every parent knows, a baby is usually happiest (and sometimes sleepest) after eating.



Get Ready, Get Set...

By preparing the kids in advance of your travels, you can build excitement and set expectations. Before you go:

- Show them pictures of your destination. Look in travels brochures or on the Internet. Read books about your vacation spot—the children's librarian is a great resource.
- Discuss appropriate behavior. Talk about how people should act on planes and trains. Play "pretend" and let the kids practice.
- If your children will be exposed to a new cuisine, give them a little taste of it before you go. This can create excitement and may help avoid restaurant challenges later on.

Upcoming Articles

June 2008

Family Feud: Strategies for Handling Sibling Rivalry

July 2008

Fitness, Foods and Moods: Keeping your Family Fit

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Car Travel

Create a Diversion: Long car rides are notorious for bringing out the impatience in children. Pack something to captivate their attention—toys, books, portable video games and CD players. Make sure you remember extra batteries for the gadgets, too.

Make a Game of It: Ask everyone to keep an eye out for license plates from far-away states. Try to find words on highway signs that start with every letter of the alphabet. Games are a great way to pass the time and bring the family closer.

Get Out and Play: Expecting a child to sit still for hours upon end is unrealistic. Before embarking on a long road trip, map out rest stops along the way. Pick open areas where they can play, expend some energy and use the bathroom.

Hotel Safety

No Lifeguard on Duty: If you plan to stay at a hotel overnight, make sure that the children are within eyesight. Most hotel pools do not have on-duty lifeguards and will not be responsible for your child's safety.

Out and About

Be Flexible: You may have an itinerary as long as your arm, but flexibility is necessary with the little ones. Consider how many stimuli the kids can handle and be willing to adjust as you go along. A “go-go-go!” mentality for the entire trip may overwhelm the kids.

Conflict Resolution

Sibling conflict can put a major damper on your vacation. To avoid a big headache, discuss expectations in advance. After all, a vacation away doesn't mean a vacation from good behavior. Hold the kids to the same standards you do at home.

If “time-outs” are a helpful tool in your everyday life, create a time-out space in your hotel room. For many families, it works best to give both arguing kids a time-out. This sends the message that cooperation is key. Remember to praise children for being courteous and helpful with each other.



In the event that the car becomes a warzone between confined siblings, pull off at the nearest rest area and resolve all conflicts. A driver can't concentrate on the road while playing referee.

For some families, conflict

is ongoing and difficult to curtail. You may feel overwhelmed by the task of keeping the peace. If this is the case for you, seek support. UBH is here to help. Call or log on anytime for help with any of life's challenges.

Resources

United Behavioral Health

Ask your HR representative for your access code and toll-free number.

www.liveandworkwell.com

Use the search phrase “sibling rivalry” for more about helping children deal with conflict.

Use the search phrase “active vacations” for information about healthy family getaways.