



Before you roam, always read up on weather conditions, latest travel news and info about destinations. What you also must thoroughly research is recently-reported infections, diseases and other ailments spread among senior travelers.

For seniors who fear catching illnesses while crammed into trains, planes, buses, taxis, vans and cruise ships, here are some hints on fighting back: 1. Your mature digestive, immune and other systems just aren't what they used to be. You're ever more vulnerable to contagion. For example, on your wanderings, stay away from potentially harmful foods and water. The delicacies on the street vendor's cart may look enticing, but a salad back at the hotel or aboard ship is much safer. That water fountain in the town square may look refreshing, but stick to commercially bottled water.

2. On some flights, the same polluted air is constantly recirculated, and everything spewed out by coughs and sneezes comes back into the cabin again and again. The airlines claim totally clean air is brought into the system from outside about every 90 seconds, but that doesn't protect passengers from the initial sneezes and coughs.

3. If a coughing sicko sits next to you, especially when you're trapped in the middle of a five-seat-across flying sardine can, there's not much you can do about it. You can ask the flight attendant to find you another seat. If that's not possible, turn on one of those little overhead air vents and direct the flow on you and away from the problem.

4. To prevent infection as well as you can, be sure to take along on your trip such helpful items as mouth wash, medicated wipe pads for face, nose and hands, aspirin, first aid gear and other useful preventive meds.

5. When seated in the airport, train or bus station, Murphy's Law always too often kicks in. Invariably, a mom with three colicky kids sit next to you, each with a different illness, and all willing to share them with you. Unless the waiting area is mobbed, just quietly get up and away.

In general, do your best when traveling to avoid the senior disease of the month by taking precautions to prevent or meds to ease any problems when they strike.