

Phew what a scorcher!

Once a year. Two weeks in the sun. The race is on. A deep tan will show your mates back in the office just how good your holiday was. But is this really the recipe to produce a Greek Adonis? In fact it's more likely to produce Lobster Thermidor. Your skin takes time to adapt to intense sunlight. You will not get a lasting tan by allowing your skin to get red. Instead, you are going to ruin your hard earned holiday with sun burn or even cause skin cancer.

We have plenty to resent the Aussies for: Neighbours and stealing our Ashes to name but two. However, Sheila the kangaroo has some wise words which you would do well to heed:

“Slip, slap, slop.”

- Slip on you sun glasses.
- Slap on your hat.
- Slop on your sun cream.

For those about to tan:

- √ Increase exposure to the sun slowly. Initially only leave skin unclothed for 20 minutes at a time.
- √ Avoid the sun between 11 am and 3 pm.
- √ Always use high factor sun creams, factor 15 and above, and reapply often, particularly after swimming.
- √ Use protective clothing before you burn. Light cotton shirts and trousers or skirts.
- √ Take special care of babies and children.
- √ Wear a T-shirt while swimming.
- √ Drink plenty of non-alcoholic drinks. If you are not peeing three times a day or more, or are passing dark yellow urine, then you are not drinking enough.

First Aid Kit

- ◆ Take an adequate supply of any medication that you take regularly or which has been prescribed by a doctor for your trip e.g. Antimalarials.
- ◆ Sterile plasters and dressings.
- ◆ Antiseptic cream or liquid.
- ◆ Paracetamol and other painkillers.
- ◆ Oral rehydration sachets or tablets.
- ◆ Antihistamine tablets for hay fever and allergic reactions to insect bites.
- ◆ Backpackers should take an emergency medical kit containing syringes (2x5ml), needles (green x5), 2 intravenous cannulas (1 grey, 1 green), 1 suture with needle (3/0 ethilon or silk), 1 packet skin closure strips, 5 alcohol swabs for skin cleansing, 5x5 cm and 10x10 cm non-stick dressings and one roll of surgical tape (micropore). Tegaderm is useful for cleaned superficial wounds.
- ◆ For those going to remote locations where doctors' surgeries are likely to be absent or inadequate (the summit of K2, or a village in the middle of the Congo for example), discuss with a specialist doctor what medications would be appropriate. Treatment for malaria (standby treatment), bloody diarrhoea or preventative treatment for altitude sickness may be considered.