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A Safer Way to Travel – Tips on buying Travel Insurance.

One of the most important things to realize about travel insurance is that it may be important to buy your travel insurance as soon as you've decided to travel. More kinds of risks are covered by insuring earlier rather than later.

What Travel Insurance Covers and What it Doesn't

Most trip insurance covers trip cancellation, trip interruption or delays, medical, dental, emergency medical transportation, lost luggage, missed connections, itinerary change, accidental death, financial default of airlines, cruise lines and tour operators and so on. Different policies offer differing amounts of coverage for all these kinds of loss. But travel insurance also contains exclusions that rule out coverage in many situations. The exclusions can differ from policy to policy so you have to study them carefully. Before you buy, make sure that these exclusions don't eat into coverage you are counting on. Take the time to look at the fine print.

Most of the standard covered items are pretty obvious but a few points should be clarified. First, changing your mind about a trip, or figuring out that you can't afford to go, aren't generally covered.

Another important point is medical evacuation. Medical evacuation involves airlifting you out of an obscure location where the medical care may not be so good. Medical evacuations are rare, but if you do need one, you'll need it badly! The costs can add up to tens of thousands of dollars, so it's the kind of risk that warrants insurance coverage. But this kind of insurance has a number of standard exemptions that have to be addressed.

Some policies have particular requirements before insured evacuation is triggered. For example, you might have to get a medical or claims examiner's opinion about the seriousness of your condition before you can be evacuated. Other policies leave it to the insured's discretion

Your policy could provide evacuation right from the site of injury, or it could require you to get to an airfield or hospital first. This provision could be very important because you might not be any place near an airport or hospital.



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Your policy could simply oblige the insurer to get you to an "adequate" health care facility, or it could require that you be taken home, or to a hospital of your choosing. This is important so read the fine print!

Probably the most important proviso in medical evacuation coverage, is pre-existing condition proviso. Insurance companies only like to insure against ordinary risks that they can evaluate on probability tables. They hate extraordinary risks. So, if you have any serious medical conditions, you should think about insurance as soon as you start considering a trip.

Other examples of what medical evacuation policies won't cover is evacuation for a simple fracture or if you have an airborne contagion. With current rising fears of avian bird flu, this contingency can be important and you should look for it.

Coverage You May Not Need

There are a few kinds of insurance related to travel that you don't need because you are probably covered by other sources. For example, you probably don't need flight insurance because your term life insurance will likely cover accidental death and your medical insurance will likely cover any injury that happens in flight. Likewise, accidental death insurance is probably a duplicate of any life insurance you carry and the odds are really with you - only about 5% of people die in accidents. Also forget the collision damage waiver at the car rental counter because the chances are it is a duplicate of your auto insurance or may even be covered on the credit cards you use in the rental.