


- Trying to decide whether to take a vacation or not?
- Need help determining what vacation is right for your family?





## Are Vacations Healthy?


You save! You plan!  
You pack! You go! You  
come home exhausted!


A 2002 Gallup survey found that most people return from vacation more tired than when they left. Other findings include:

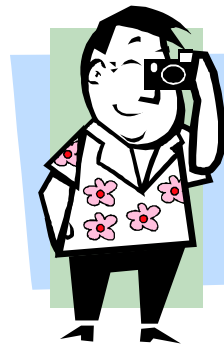
 Sleep deficit directly before and during vacations is common.

 Many people go into debt to go on vacation.

 Over half the people packed the day before with 10% packing on the day of departure.

 54% woke up early to leave on vacation, resulting in the initial sleep deprivation.

 36% worked harder or longer hours prior to the vacation to prepare for being away.



For many people, annual vacations are part of life. But how healthy are they? Like anything, vacations can be mentally and physically refreshing or frustrating and tiresome. There are many factors to consider when planning a vacation: family size, number and ages of children, finances, timing, interests, purpose and more.

In this issue, we'll examine various vacation considerations. Discover what works for your family before you go! Make your vacation a healthy, healing trip rather than a travel nightmare.

For those of you who never take vacations, well that's a topic for another issue!

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# What's the Point?

Before planning your vacation, you need to decide why you're going. If you're desiring peace and rest, a trip to Disney World will defeat the purpose. Or if you have small children, an overseas vacation may not be worth the effort and cost.

This may sound logical, but it's amazing how many people don't have a clear picture of why they're going on vacation and return home feeling discontent. As well, when we're not clearly focused on our goals, we effect others' lives. Taking small children on primarily adult vacations, such as cruise ships without children's activities or a European tour, most likely will result in the children not being happy. When children aren't happy in public, most of the people around them aren't happy either!

vacation or no one will benefit. It's possible to have a vacation that meets multiple needs. For example, a trip to the Bahamas could give Mom relaxing time on the beach, Dad golfing opportunities and the kids adventure time snorkeling and sailing. It also offers enough variety to allow a family member to change his mind once there and do other things. Again, the key is having a big picture of your reason for vacationing.

Couples often go on a vacation that sounds "fun" and then realize

what they really needed was time alone together. Rather than returning renewed and closer, they're exhausted and bickering. If you're planning a trip as a couple, take time to discuss what your goals are while you're gone. One trip can meet a variety of needs if you consider them in the planning



Vacation planning requires communicating with your family and spouse about your own needs and desires. If you have difficulty doing this, contact your Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-899-3926.

Does that mean that childless people should stay away from vacation spots with children? Certainly not! Some people delight in being around children, especially if they don't have children themselves or their children are grown. The important point is that you understand why you are taking your vacation and plan accordingly.

What happens when families start planning a vacation and realize that different people have different reasons for going? It is essential to consider each person going on the

stages.

For single people, it would seem that vacation planning would be simple. Unfortunately, even individuals don't stop to evaluate why they need a vacation!

Vacations can be healthy for your mind and body, but it is essential to evaluate the "why" before you determine the "where"!

## Which Vacations are the Healthiest?

Once you've determined the purpose of your vacation (see p. 2), you can instantly eliminate certain vacation options. What needs to be considered next to find the healthiest vacation for you and your family? Respond to the following questions, as you plan:

- ◆ **How much vacation can you afford?** If you go into debt to take a relaxing vacation, the stress of paying off that debt may certainly counteract any possible benefits. Many people overspend while they are on vacation and spend months, even years, paying off their debt. This prevents them from taking another vacation anytime soon without acquiring more debt. By budgeting the travel expenses and the amount you can afford to splurge on food, special activities and souvenirs, you'll return from your vacation happier and healthier!
- ◆ **How much physical activity can you endure?** If you are not generally a physically active person, a vacation full of climbing, swimming, hiking etc. could generate more trouble than good. If you want to take a vacation that includes rigorous activity, be sure that you are physically in shape to do so. You may need to plan ahead and start working out. You might also want to see your doctor and get a complete

physical. Injury or exhaustion can ruin a long looked-forward to vacation.

- ◆ **Do you have phobias that limit your vacation options?** Fears of things like flying and heights need to be considered before making vacation plans. If you can't swim or are afraid of water, a cruise might not be your best experience. A family vacation can be ruined by one member having a fear of certain experiences or events. If you'd like to plan a vacation that presents you with phobic issues, contact your Employee Assistance Program. We can help you work through your phobias and fears. We're here for you, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day at 1-800-899-3926.

It's essential to examine all of these issues before you make vacation plans. Otherwise, you may find yourself returning from vacation more stressed than when you left: in debt, injured or just plain exhausted!



Many people overspend while they are on vacation and take months, even years, paying off their debt.

# Vacation Planner



Answering the following questions may help you plan a successful vacation! If you have difficulties making decisions or communication challenges within your family while planning your vacation, give your Employee Assistance Program a call. We can help you overcome those issues!

1. What is the primary goal of your vacation? (to relax, to have an adventure, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your vacation need to accommodate children, as well as adults?
3. If any, what physical considerations need to be considered?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. If any, what phobias or fears need to be considered and/or addressed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How much money can you afford to spend on your vacation? (If you can't take a vacation without going into debt, you should consider planning further ahead and saving enough money to do so.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Taking all of the above into consideration, what possible vacation destinations would work for you and your family?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vacations require planning and communication. If you find yourself struggling with either of these issues, remember we're here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week just for you!

Contact your **Employee Assistance Program** at **1-800-899-3926**.

## Publishing Information

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