

View Point

The High You Fly, the Drier you are: Tips for the Frequent and Long Haul Flyers

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Flying, the quickest and most convenient means of getting around, comes with a number of drawbacks. The typical well-being issues that affect aeroplane travellers, for example, are often the effect of lack of moisture in the cabin air, which can result severe dehydration if you are not cautious.¹

The human body remains in best comfort at around 50 percent of humidity, whereas moistness of an aeroplane's cabin can drop down to 10 percent. In turn, that could be drier than residing in a desert.² The air circulation of a typical flight cabin is more than fifteen times in an hour, comparing an office building experiencing air shift of twelve times per hour. Moreover, the cabin air is pressurized due to its cycling through engine. Thus the air become heated, which after that has to be cooled. This continually repeating process produces extremely dry air.³

Typically flying causes dehydration in travellers resulting from breathing out of most fluids from the body through mouth. To date, the reality is our body loses about two cups of water for every hour completed flying.⁴

The health effect of dehydration in long flight can range from mild discomfort e.g. dry skin, scratchy eyes, fatigue to serious issue like deep vein clots.⁵ Remaining in a low-humidity atmosphere has another warning: the increased risk of grasping a respiratory virus, such as a cold. Generally, humidity in the air keeps airways moist, so that the coating can trap germs trying to enter inside the body. The longer is your flight, the drier your mucosa get; the drier they get, the more prone you are to infection.⁶ While flying, a passenger's risk to get a common cold attack is 100 times more than not being in plane.⁷

To make the in-flight part as the pleasant section of your trip, following these rules of thumb could be the smart way in combating air dryness:

1. Drink plenty of beverages: Get ready for your flight by purchasing a large bottle of water before stepping onto the plane, and sip from it all through your time on

the aircraft. Be aware of drinks containing alcohol or caffeine, which may aggravate the dehydration. Thus, these beverages should be avoided or kept to a handful only. Nothing can actually substitute the plain water or isotonic drink.

- 2. Bring a good conditioner:** The cabin air dryness can affect your skin, causing it to become dry, flaky, and itchy. You can moist your skin from inside by drinking a lot of water and from outside by smearing a moisturizer, may be on to your face, hands and wherever you can add on wetness. Don't forget to pack a travel-size pile of your favourite lotion in the purse.
- 3. Take an eye drops:** The medicated eye drops recommended by your doctor can be a lifeguard in dehydrated cabin, particularly if you are using contact lenses.
- 4. Get nasal sprays:** There are many people who experiences nasal discomfort and even nose bleedings due to in-flight dryness. Consider packing a saline spray or nose drops, if your nasal lining becomes dry due to the low cabin humidity.
- 5. Check your medication box:** If you are asthmatic and a steroid inhaler user, talk to your doctor to check whether the medicines will be sufficient for the entire trip, or your prescription need to be revisited.

At the final point, it is strongly advisable to maintain hydration by drinking a lot of water, especially on-board as well as prior and after a flight.

Keywords: aircraft; dehydration; humidity.

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