

# VITAMIN Jay

## Have Pills, Will Travel



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Picture this. It's 7:49 A.M. on a cold, dark, February Sunday. You're 400 miles from anything that even closely resembles home, in the depths of a wickedly enticing dream in a mid-level hotel. Suddenly, you awake to something unfamiliar and cold and disruptive. Your level of frustration evolves as you slip slowly from REM to sub-consciousness, knowing without reservation that you are officially awake, and that the dream is a poof of smoke.

You also know that something is very, very wrong.

Then, before you even have time to contemplate which S.O.B. you're going to scream at first, a wave of horror rushes down your spine as you realize that you're soaking wet from the neck up. After a few seconds of simple architectural calculations, you vomit a little in mouth as you realize that the toilet above you has been leaking onto your face as you slept. What then? What's next?

Unfortunately, this story pulls no need for exaggeration. It happened to me on a recent jaunt of fear and loathing through central Michigan, at a hotel that will remain nameless. Still, there is little Comfort Inn knowing that while you slept, you were feasting on some sort of infested liquid drip.

Fortunately, when I travel, I travel with a veritable arsenal of dietary supplements. And while there was certainly no way to predict a scenario of that stripe, I'm glad that this was a regular travel habit of mine. Had I not been nutritionally armed to the teeth, there is no telling what sort of ill outcome would have manifested days, even weeks down the road.

And this got me thinking. Traveling is about so much more than snapping photographs, trying the local cuisine, and breathing in the unfamiliar air that blows via foreign, far away wind. When you think about it, traveling is an unceasing test of the body's ability to cope away from home. Because after all, at home we have our own bathrooms, with our own medicine cabinets, and scores of our own remedies. And yet the vast majority of travelers embark on a myriad of adventures, armed only with OTC headache medication.

With travel season just around the corner, I thought that this would be a fitting time to take a look at some of the best dietary supplements and natural products to take along as you skip town, head for the border, or cross the big blue pond.

### Alpha Lipoic Acid

Traveling, as we all find out at some point, can be unsuspectingly

stressful. The mental and physical requirements needed to navigate an unfamiliar destination, organize time, plan activities, budget funds, and chase after wild-eyed children can reduce even the most staunch of traveler to the level of frenzied beast. Alpha Lipoic Acid is a highly potent antioxidant that has a uniqueness all its own. Unlike all other antioxidants that are either fat- or water-soluble, Alpha Lipoic Acid can be utilized by every cell in the body. In fact, researchers have dubbed it the "universal" antioxidant, based on how versatile it is within the body.

### Colostrum

Colostrum is essentially what keeps every newborn mammal from dying of infection after exiting the womb. This nutrient-rich milk-like liquid is produced by mammals during the first 12-48 hours after birth, and used to give the immune system a jumpstart that lasts the rest of their lives. If you can get past that, you'll be glad that you kept a bottle in your luggage. Colostrum is potent, and freakishly effective in boosting the body's natural defenses. Taken at the first sign of anything that feels askew, colostrum is a true champion among immune support supplements.

### Olive Leaf Extract

The health seeking public has been consuming olive leaf extract for thousands of years to counter the effects of inflammation and other general forms malaise. Standardized Olive leaf extracts is loaded with a naturally-occurring compound called Oleuropein. This phenolic compound has been shown in a number of studies to exhibit very strong antimicrobial and antioxidant properties. Even better, the plant's active compounds seem to shine within the cells and tissues that make up the respiratory and digestive systems; ironically, these are among the most vulnerable for infection. Always buy standardized extracts to ensure guaranteed potency of active compounds.

### Tea Tree Oil

First and foremost, don't ever consume tea tree oil. This very potent essential oil extract is a wonderful topical disinfectant that some people can tolerate on blemishes, cold sores, and other minor epidermal challenges. The key word here is "some" people. Tea Tree oil is strong, powerful stuff that was once used by Australian farmers to clean equipment and dress minor amputations. Only those with true grit can apply it neat, or directly on the skin. For everyone else, it should be diluted with water, and then tested gently on a small patch of skin. If you don't have any reactions to it, you'll find yourself carrying a bottle around at all times, for situations that I won't even bother discussing right now.

### Zinc Lozenges

A large percentage of the bacteria and viruses that leave us fatigued, vomiting uncontrollably, and

drenched in cold sweat actually set up shop at the base of the throat before spreading throughout the body. And believe it or not, this can actually work in your favor. If you create an environment that is not favorable to their survival, they will have no choice but to exit the body. And as science has taught us, bacterial agents hate zinc. Showering the throat with a thin layer of zinc can be a very effective method in preventing them from planting their flag. It's important that you take the lozenge route on this one. Swallowing a zinc capsule won't cut it, because it won't coat the throat and base of the tongue. If you get nauseous, eat something. Zinc is notorious for stomach discomfort.

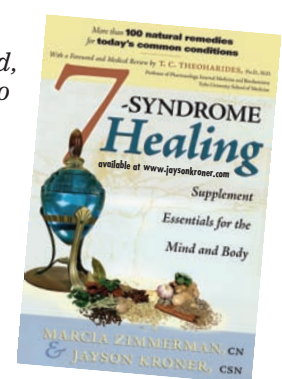
### Milk Thistle

The benefits of milk thistle (Silymarin) when it comes to healthy travel are two-fold. This time-honored herb has been used throughout the ages to improve and purify the cells of the liver, promote healthy digestion, and increase the body's production of bile—our main digestive juice. This makes it perfect for anyone with pension for weekend drinking benders, wine tours, or open bar weddings. Because of its influence on bile production, it may also help stave off traveler's constipation that inevitably shows up at the most inopportune moments.

Now, I don't want to impart the need to rush out and stockpile everything I've mentioned. These are only suggestions to cover a wide range of potential threats. Each individual's travel habits are unique. Assessing them honestly can serve as a good way to determine what you might want to consider packing on your next trip. If you decide to make supplementation a permanent part of your travel regimen, be sure to label your supplements accurately, paying close attention to the potencies, expiration dates, and any potential warnings. So on behalf of everyone at Chicago Wellness Magazine, here's to traveling safe and enjoying a lovely summer.

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