



## CLL and Travel: Is It Safe?

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**Andrew Schorr:**

But the point about the immune system is can we travel? What would you recommend, because we have CLL on the brain? We're worried about it. And we're worried about being in any kind of environment or an experience where maybe we're putting ourselves at risk.

**Dr. Keating:**

We do a lot of tests for immune system function. The immunoglobulin levels, IGG and IGA, etc. And we can measure the number of CD4 and CD8 counts, etc. But in actual fact, the best predictor of whether someone is going to get an infection is whether they've had infections recently. So if you're going through your life, and you're not having more infections than everyone else around you, you're probably not at any particular risk.

There's a lot of redundancy in our immune system. So there's a lot of redundancy in every system that we have. Why do we have two kidneys? Well, just in case one craps out. And, unfortunately, hearts and brains, there's only one of those so not wanting to be a heart donor or anything like that. So there are some things, we know that the air recirculated in the planes is going to be full of some junk. But there's no other way to get there. So you just sort of trade up and say I'm willing to take a bit of a risk.

I think when you do travel, you should travel, if you're traveling internationally, with a couple of antibiotics. Something like ciprofloxacin (Cipro) and sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim) if you're not allergic to sulfurs.

There's a good, broad cover of pretty much most of the acute episodes that you get. And if you're traveling to another place, and you're really concerned about it, your doctor may well know some expert in that particular field. When Andrew was over in Barcelona, Dr. Monserat is an expert over in Barcelona. So you get the name of someone, and you just call up and say my doctor said to speak to you if I had some problem.

**Andrew Schorr:**

Right. What about wearing a mask? Sometimes, you get on a plane on international flights, and you see people, particularly from Asia, but not always, wearing a mask. Any validity to wearing a mask that's going to make a difference?

**Dr. Keating:**

It would have to be a super, super mask, because, after a short period of time the mask just gets so plugged up with moisture that they become ineffective. So you can't just go and buy some masks from Walgreens and say it's going to work.

And I just don't even worry about the whole thing. And very few of my patients that have come back from trips have ever said that they had anything bad happen to them.

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