

## INTRODUCTION

*If you listen to your patients, they will tell what is wrong. It is your job to understand what is being said and relate it to your knowledge.*

—Wallace N. Jensen, MD MACP

*Give me the uncle of your chicken!*

—A tourist.

ALTHOUGH THE ABOVE QUOTES MAY SEEM COMPLETELY DISPARATE, THEY are actually quite closely related. The first quote is from my father, a Professor of Medicine and teacher of medicine for more than fifty years. He taught me the importance of listening to my patients and much more about the practice of medicine through the years.

The second quote is from a story related by a patient. It reflects misinterpretation of language despite the best of intentions. The story grew from his recent trip to Europe and the humorous events surrounding meals, transportation, and other challenges they faced in a foreign country. They did their best to speak the language but sometimes, obviously, came up a bit short.

With these two in mind, one can see the beauty, difficulty, and insight involved in any medical interview. The transfer of information between physician and patient constitutes a vital key in the practice of medicine. The selection of medical tests, interpretation of test results, and initiation of therapy are all based upon the initial medical interview.

This book is designed to assist patients in delivering pertinent medical information to a foreign healthcare provider. A medical interview between two persons who are speaking the same language can be confusing. The addition of a foreign language and social barrier will certainly further complicate this difficult situation.

While this book will help clarify communication between people who speak a different language, the patient should understand that no text can ever substitute for a complete medical history. If there is any doubt, an interpreter is always beneficial.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**Fill out as many sections of this book as you feel necessary.  
Information is always useful to a physician.**

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK IS TO ALLOW THE PATIENT, WHEN CHALLENGED with medical illness and a language barrier, to accurately explain his illness to a foreign physician. The medical information is based on the concepts of “pertinent positives and negatives.” The format of the book is one of “yes” answers. By choosing only the “yes” answers, the “pertinent positives” (and hence “pertinent negatives”) to a medical history are provided to the treating physician.

The book is structured in such a fashion as to provide this information without a two-way conversation in a foreign language. This text is not a substitute for a medical translator. The participants will be the only persons who can fully determine if adequate information has been exchanged.

It is my firm hope that you will not need this book during your travels. However, if you do it should provide you with the ability to rapidly communicate essential information to those providing healthcare.

Reviewing the guidelines prior to your departure will help provide important medical information to your physician.

**Gathering and recording this information will assure that it is readily available when and if you need it during a medical emergency. You will not be able to collect this data while abroad. Now is the time to think about the guidelines and to obtain any other medical information that you think might be pertinent.**

Review all the sections of this book and become familiar with the layout and the contents. Be sure you understand how the text works and what it can (and cannot) do for you while traveling.

Two basic instructions (in addition to common sense) are carried out throughout this book. These are:

**Check only those questions to which you answer “YES”**

**Circle all that apply**

By reading through the text prior to completing a section and the above instructions you will maximize your transfer of information. The process may be tedious but it is important.

Have a safe and fulfilling trip.

# TRAVEL GUIDELINES

## **What you need to do four to six weeks prior to departure**

### **Arrange for an office visit with your physician**

Inform the office of your travel needs prior to seeing the physician. This allows the medical office to make copies of any needed records and the physician the opportunity to dictate letters or provide any medical information which may be required for your travel. Office visits are the best method since they allow your physician to dedicate time needed to address your individual concerns and medical problems.

If you are traveling as a family, remember to contact your pediatrician or family practitioner regarding your children's medical conditions. A consultation with a travel medicine specialist for any vaccinations and recommendations is mandatory.

Further information about the prevention of medical problems can be obtained from several sources. The Center for Disease Control has up-to-date medical travel information. Their Web site is [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). The International Society for Travel Medicine (ISTM) has a list of members who specialize in Travel Medicine. Their web-site is [www.ISTM.org](http://www.ISTM.org). Click on the Travel Clinics (by location tab). This will allow access to a list of physician members by country. This reference is invaluable.

**As we all know, medical illness is an unexpected event. Good outcomes are based upon anticipation and planning. Read this book and make all the preparations outlined, plus any of those you think are beneficial.**

The following is the information you will need:

- Full name of your physician(s)
- Physician's address
- Physician's telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address
- Complete list of all current medications (brand and generic names), doses, and frequencies

- Your blood type
- A copy of your eyeglass prescription
- Complete list of all allergies—medical and environmental
- Complete list of all current and past medical problems. If you have a complicated medical problem, such as migraine headaches, write down the date, studies (CT scan, MRI, etc.) and pertinent results of these evaluations. Consider copying the reports to take with you on your trip.
- Complete list of any unusual medical events you have experienced.
- A letter from your physician, on his letterhead, listing any medications you will be taking with you during your travels
- List of all vaccinations and dates

### **Contact your insurance company**

Request information regarding your insurance coverage while traveling abroad. What are the limitations of your policy? Can you get supplemental insurance to cover medical emergencies? Does your company have offices in your planned areas of travel? Obtain these phone numbers and record them in the appropriate sections within this book. Make three copies of all of the above information.

Leave one copy with someone in the United States who will be available to assist you should it be necessary. This person should also have a copy of all your passports, visas, itinerary, emergency contacts, credit cards, etc. In the event that you become incapacitated and require such assistance, this information is extremely valuable. You might wish to discuss such a situation with a lawyer prior to departure.

The second copy should be with your extra copy of all your passports, visas, emergency contacts, etc. If loss of one copy occurs, you are assured of adequate information regarding your credit cards, passports, and other important documents.

Place the third copy with *Globetrotter's Pocket Doc*.

# DEALING WITH MEDICAL PROBLEMS WHILE ABROAD

BOTH MAJOR AND MINOR MEDICAL PROBLEMS OCCUR FREQUENTLY. Furthermore, you may need to make medical decisions regarding your health and/or those of your traveling companions. In all situations, consider whether this can be treated without a physician (such as replacement of lost medications, requesting cold remedies, etc.) or by a physician (chest pain, abdominal pain, etc.). After this decision has been made, select the appropriate section of this book for further assistance.

To effectively get help abroad, you must be able to communicate. Paramount to this is written pertinent information about your personal health. **Please do not neglect to fill out the sections on medical history.** If you have no known allergies to medications, write in the allergy section “No Known Drug Allergies (NKDA).” If the section is left blank, a physician may not know whether it has not yet been filled out or is truly negative. **Complete all of these forms!**

If you are traveling with a family, copy the forms you will be using from this book and fill them out for each family member.

## **When obtaining any medical care, follow these guidelines.**

- Introduce yourself using the Patient Introduction Section.
- Allow the healthcare provider to read the Physician Introduction. This section introduces the text and how it may provide assistance.
- Be sure to show the Medical History Section to the healthcare provider.
- Select the section(s) most appropriate to your complaints.
- Read through the section first to be sure that you have selected correctly.
- Read through a second time, checking the appropriate boxes only for YES answers.
- Circle any multiple choice sections within a question. Follow the rule, “Circle all that apply.” This format is kept throughout the book and allows for pertinent “positives” and “negatives” to

be translated to the provider.

- Be polite and patient. You are in a difficult situation that may try your patience and cause anxiety. Being rude does not help.

### **Minor Medical Problems**

Minor medical problems occur frequently. If a child has a runny nose or a cold, formal medical consultation may not be required. Many parents are well educated in the diagnosis and treatment of their children's minor health problems. A simple trip to the local pharmacy may be all that is required to solve the problem.

Unfortunately, the pharmacy in a foreign country is not the typical pharmacy in the United States. Although a parent may know that Robutussin works quite well for their child's cold, Robitussin may not be available in another country. Many medications are similar. The differences may include dose, frequency, name and combination of drugs within a specific preparation. However, finding the appropriate medication requires communication with the pharmacist. This text has a comprehensive list of over-the-counter medications, generic names, and the translation. Every effort has been made to ensure that these are accurate.

As an example, let us assume that Billy, your 16-year-old son, has a common cold successfully managed in the USA with Aleve Cold and Sinus medicine. In this case, you can use the Personal Information Section to describe to the pharmacist the age, sex, weight, and familial relation of the child. Next, you would proceed to the Minor Complaint Section and report to the pharmacist that he has a cold. A quick look in the Non-Prescription Medication Section will show a variety of medications that are used to treat this condition, including the preferred Aleve Cold and Sinus. By showing the pharmacist this information, an appropriate substitute can be identified. What is the end result? A grateful son, a happy family, and a vacation that continues on as planned.

Always use the Personal Medical History Section of this book when discussing any health related matter while in a foreign country. **It is advisable to fill this out for all travelers prior to leaving the country. This ensures that the data is available to anyone who might need it quickly.**

### **Major Medical Problems**

*Globetrotter's Pocket Doc* assists with these needs by providing descriptions of acute medical problem, personal medical history information, and a prescription medication translation section. The questions may seem tedious. However, by answering all these questions, the physician will be able to ascertain important information, not only from the "Yes" answers (those that have been checked or circled) but also by the negatives (the ones that have not been checked or circled.) This is a basic technique used during the medical interview. It allows a physician to understand what is called "the pertinent positives and negatives" of a medical history. In addition, the prescription medication section contains about 200 commonly prescribed medications, their generic names, and translations. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these medications and their translations.



# IMPORTANT BASIC INFORMATION FORMS

## Health Insurance

Name of Insurance Carrier \_\_\_\_\_

Home office street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Policy number \_\_\_\_\_ Group number \_\_\_\_\_

Group insured (company) \_\_\_\_\_

Local office street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Policy number \_\_\_\_\_ Group number \_\_\_\_\_

Group insured (company) \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I am traveling on (check one)

business     pleasure

I am traveling with (check one)

friends     my family     business associates     alone

Business name \_\_\_\_\_

Business street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Business contact \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## Local Information

Name of hotel or temporary residence \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Contact Information (Local)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Business \_\_\_\_\_

Business Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information (United States)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Business \_\_\_\_\_

Business Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Relatives or Contacts**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Business phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Medical Information

Personal Physician \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Consulting Physician \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty \_\_\_\_\_

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Fax number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

### **Medical History**

Event

Date

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### **Surgical History**

Event

Date

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### **Hospitalizations**

Reason for Admission

Date

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**Immunizations**  
(especially important for children)

Immunization

Date

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## PHYSICIAN INTRODUCTION

Dear Physician,

Having been in exactly the position you are presently in, I have written this book to assist those traveling in foreign countries in furnishing their medical information. It is designed to provide some basic information regarding medical problems which are likely to cause a patient to request professional assistance.

The book is designed to provide a good medical history, “pertinent positives” and, by elimination, “pertinent negatives.” In the front of the book, the patient should have completed information forms regarding their medical history, medications, allergies, etc. There is no family history form included since most acute medical problems will not require this information.

This book is not a comprehensive review of the history. Hopefully, it will provide you with enough information to make an accurate diagnosis without a translator. However, only you can make a decision regarding the need for such services during a medical evaluation.

Since many patients will require follow-up care upon returning home, this text will also serve as a guide for their hometown physician.

I hope that this text is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Jonathan E. Jensen, MD FACP  
Board Certified Internal Medicine  
Board Certified Gastroenterology  
Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine  
University Health Sciences Center of Colorado  
Denver, Colorado

## PRÉSENTATION DU MÉDECIN

Cher/ère collègue,

Pour m'être trouvé dans la même situation que celle dans laquelle vous vous trouvez en ce moment, j'ai écrit cet ouvrage pour aider les patients voyageant à l'étranger à fournir des renseignements sur leur état de santé. Cet ouvrage a été conçu pour fournir des renseignements de base concernant des problèmes médicaux susceptibles de nécessiter une assistance médicale.

Ce livre a été conçu pour faire apparaître clairement les antécédents médicaux du patient ainsi que les symptômes importants et, par élimination, l'absence de symptômes importants. Au début du livre, le patient devra avoir rempli un questionnaire médical indiquant ses antécédents médicaux, ses traitements en cours, ses allergies, etc. Cet ouvrage n'inclut pas les antécédents familiaux car la plupart des problèmes médicaux sérieux ne nécessitent pas ce genre de renseignements.

Ce livre ne prétend pas donner une liste exhaustive de tous les antécédents médicaux. Mais il vous fournira, je l'espère, suffisamment de renseignements pour vous permettre de faire un diagnostic correct sans avoir besoin d'un traducteur. Il va de soi, néanmoins, que vous seul êtes à même de prendre une décision concernant la nécessité d'avoir recours aux services d'un traducteur durant le bilan médical.

Etant donné que de nombreux patients nécessiteront un suivi médical à leur retour aux Etats-Unis, cet ouvrage servira également de guide à leur médecin de famille lorsqu'ils rentreront.

En espérant que cet ouvrage vous sera utile.

Sincères salutations,

Jonathan E. Jensen, Docteur en Médecine  
(FACP: Fellow of the American College of Physicians)  
Diplômé en Médecine Interne  
Diplômé en Gastro-entérologie

## INTRODUCCIÓN PARA EL MÉDICO

Estimado Doctor,

Habiendo estado exactamente en la posición que usted está ahora, he escrito este libro para ayudar a aquellos que viajan a países extranjeros a suministrar su información médica. Está diseñado para proporcionar cierta información básica con respecto a los problemas médicos que podrían causar que un paciente solicite ayuda profesional.

El libro ha sido diseñado para proporcionar una buena historia clínica, los "positivos pertinentes" y, por eliminación, los "negativos pertinentes". Al inicio del libro, el paciente debe haber llenado los formularios de información con respecto a su historia clínica, medicinas, alergias, etc. No se ha incluido ningún formulario de antecedentes familiares, puesto que la mayoría de los problemas médicos graves no requerirán esta información.

Este libro no es una revisión exhaustiva de la historia clínica. Esperamos que le provea la información suficiente para hacer un diagnóstico exacto sin un traductor. Sin embargo, solamente usted puede tomar una decisión con respecto a la necesidad de tales servicios durante una evaluación médica.

Puesto que muchos pacientes necesitarán continuar su atención luego de volver a casa, este texto también le servirá como guía al médico de la ciudad donde reside el paciente.

Espero que este texto le sea de utilidad.

Atentamente,

Dr. Jonathan E. Jensen, MD FACP  
Certificado (BC) en Medicina Interna  
Certificado (BC) en Gastroenterología  
Profesor Asociado Clínico de Medicina

Centro de Ciencias de la Salud de la Universidad de Colorado  
Denver, Colorado

## INTRODUZIONE DEL MEDICO

Cari Colleghi,

Essendomi trovato esattamente nella posizione in cui vi trovate attualmente voi, ho redatto questo testo per aiutarvi a fornire informazioni mediche a pazienti in viaggio in paesi esteri. Questo libro è stato ideato per fornire alcune informazioni di base relativamente a disturbi di carattere medico che, con molta probabilità, faranno sì che il paziente richieda assistenza professionale.

Il testo intende fornire, da un lato, una buona anamnesi, e dall'altro "dati positivi pertinenti" e, per eliminazione, "dati negativi pertinenti." All'inizio del libro, il paziente dovrebbe avere compilato la sezione relativa alla propria anamnesi pregressa, terapie farmacologiche, allergie, ecc. Non è prevista una parte inerente all'anamnesi familiare in quanto la maggior parte dei disturbi medici acuti non richiede tali informazioni.

Il libro non rappresenta una rassegna esaustiva dell'anamnesi, bensì è volto a fornirvi sufficienti informazioni per eseguire una diagnosi precisa senza avvalervi di un traduttore. Tuttavia, soltanto voi potrete prendere una decisione in merito alla necessità di tale servizio nel corso di una valutazione medica.

Poiché molti pazienti necessiteranno di una terapia di follow-up una volta tornati a casa, questo testo fungerà anche da guida per il rispettivo medico curante.

Spero che questo testo possa esservi utile.

Vostro,

Jonathan E. Jensen, MD FACP

Medicina Interna certificata

Gastroenterologia certificata

Docente associato di Clinica Medica

Centro Universitario per le Scienze Sanitarie del Colorado

Denver, Colorado

## EINLEITUNG FÜR DEN ARZT

Lieber Kollege,

Nachdem ich mich genau in der Situation befand, in der Sie im Moment sind, habe ich dieses Buch geschrieben. Es soll den Austausch medizinisch relevanter Informationen zwischen Ihnen und Patienten, die auf Reisen im fremdsprachigen Ausland Gesundheitsprobleme haben, erleichtern. Es enthält einige grundlegende Informationen zu jenen Gesundheitsproblemen, die Patienten in der Regel zu einem Arztbesuch veranlassen.

Mit Hilfe dieses Buches werden Sie die medizinische Vorgeschichte und die Angaben dieses Patienten/dieser Patientin zu gegenwärtig vorhandenen oder nicht vorhandenen Krankheitszeichen hoffentlich besser verstehen können. Am Anfang des Buches sollte er/sie durch das Ausfüllen der dort zu findenden Formulare seine/ihre medizinische Vorgeschichte, Medikamente, die er/sie zur Zeit einnimmt, allfällige Allergien, etc. beschrieben haben. Angaben zu Erkrankungen in der Familie sind hier nicht enthalten, da derartige Informationen für die meisten akuten medizinischen Probleme nicht relevant sind.

Das Buch bietet keinen Raum für einen kompletten Überblick über die Krankengeschichte. Ich hoffe dennoch, dass Sie genügend Informationen finden, um ohne die Hilfe eines Dolmetschers eine akkurate Diagnose erstellen zu können. Letztendlich können aber nur Sie entscheiden, ob Sie derartige Dienste während einer medizinischen Evaluation nicht doch in Anspruch nehmen sollten.

Für viele Patienten wird eine Nachbehandlung in der Heimat erforderlich sein, weshalb dieses Buch auch nach der Rückreise in die USA dem jeweiligen Hausarzt vor Ort eine Orientierungshilfe sein wird.

Ich hoffe, dass es Ihnen gute Dienste leisten wird.  
Hochachtungsvoll,

Dr. Jonathan E. Jensen

Mitglied des Amerikanischen Kollegiums für Ärzte, Facharzt für Innere Medizin, Facharzt für Gastroenterologie, Gemeinschaftspraxis für Gastroenterologie, Front Range, Longmont, Colorado  
Außerordentlicher Professor der Medizin  
Zentrum für Gesundheitswissenschaften der Universität von Colorado, Denver, Colorado

## APRESENTAÇÃO AOS MÉDICOS

Prezado Médico/a,

Tendo me já encontrado exatamente na mesma situação em que está neste momento, escrevi este livro para ajudar quem se encontre a viajar em países estrangeiros a fornecer informações médicas. Foi concebido para fornecer algumas informações básicas sobre problemas médicos que possam levar um doente a procurar assistência médica.

O livro destina-se a proporcionar uma boa ficha clínica, “positivos pertinentes” e, por eliminação, “negativos pertinentes”. Na parte inicial do livro, o doente deverá ter preenchido formulários com informações sobre a sua ficha clínica, medicamentos e alergias, etc. Não há nenhum formulário de histórico familiar, pois a maioria dos problemas médicos agudos não necessitará destas informações.

Este livro não é uma análise completa da ficha clínica, mas esperamos que forneça informações suficientes para um diagnóstico rigoroso, sem necessidade de um tradutor. No entanto, cabe-lhe apenas a si a decisão sobre a necessidade desses serviços durante um exame médica.

Como muitos doentes precisarão de acompanhamento após o regresso a casa, este texto servirá também de guia aos médicos das respectivas cidades. Espero que este texto lhe seja útil.

Atenciosamente,

Jonathan E. Jensen, MD FACP

Certificado pelo Conselho de Medicina Interna

Certificado pelo Conselho de Gastroenterologia

Professor Associado de Medicina Clínica

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