



PLANNING A SUMMER SAFARI?

Medical advice can ensure a healthy trip **BY MIMI TOWLE**

Despite the hassles and uncertainties of international travel, Americans are satisfying their wanderlust in record numbers. When browsing the U.S. Department of State website, adventurers are reminded that they should take serious precautions to assure safety and well-being: for instance, Pakistan, Chad and Algeria are on the Travel Warning list, and please *don't* lose your passport. Yet ill health is another potential danger for travelers, says Dr. Joseph Habis of Prima Medical Group in Terra Linda. Besides the basic jet lag and altitude sickness that can hamper one's experience, new and emerging diseases and a lack of immunity make U.S. travelers particularly prone to getting sick while traveling. Still, according to the International Society of Travel Medicine, only 8 percent of international travelers seek pre-travel health advice.

Ecuador-born Habis is himself an avid globe-trotter, and it was on one of his early excursions, when he helped a stricken traveler that he realized how unprepared many of us can be. "Travel health includes everything from advice on ways to prevent traveler's diarrhea to choosing the right medication to prevent malaria," he says. "Today, many prefer to travel off the beaten track, where no other tourists can be found, and they need to be educated about the risks involved." Internet-savvy travelers can visit the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov/travel for the latest on outbreaks ranging from measles in several European countries to chikungunya fever in India. To research other what-ifs, check out istm.org, which has a list of qualified travel doctors, or look into Dr. Habis's travel medicine symposium at primamedgroup.com. —M.T.

Marin On Call



Dr. Jordan Shlain and Dr. Clifford Sewell

Remember sweet ol' Dr. Vance, who came to the Waltons' country home every time Ma, Pa or one of the eight kids had a bellyache, broken arm or brain tumor? These days seeing a doctor involves months of waiting for an appointment, endless insurance hassles and if, you're lucky, five minutes of face time. Jordan Shlain, M.D., a Tam High grad, made a house call for an elderly patient one day and decided that this unhurried, comprehensive mode of care was more aligned with his instincts as a doctor, so he founded Marin On Call Medical Group.

This pioneering practice will send a physician to your home within an hour of being called. The docs travel with a full first-aid pack, medicines and Internet access to check for potential drug interactions or conflicts. They can also call in an X-ray technician if necessary. "While on one level we are reviving the tradition of doctors making house calls," says Shlain, "we are actually redefining the way doctors and patients interact and work together, literally changing the way in which health care is delivered." They don't take insurance but will help you with the paperwork to get reimbursed; as Shlain puts it, "we work alongside insurance companies, not for them." Fees are usually about \$250 per visit; for more information go to marinoncall.com. —M.T.