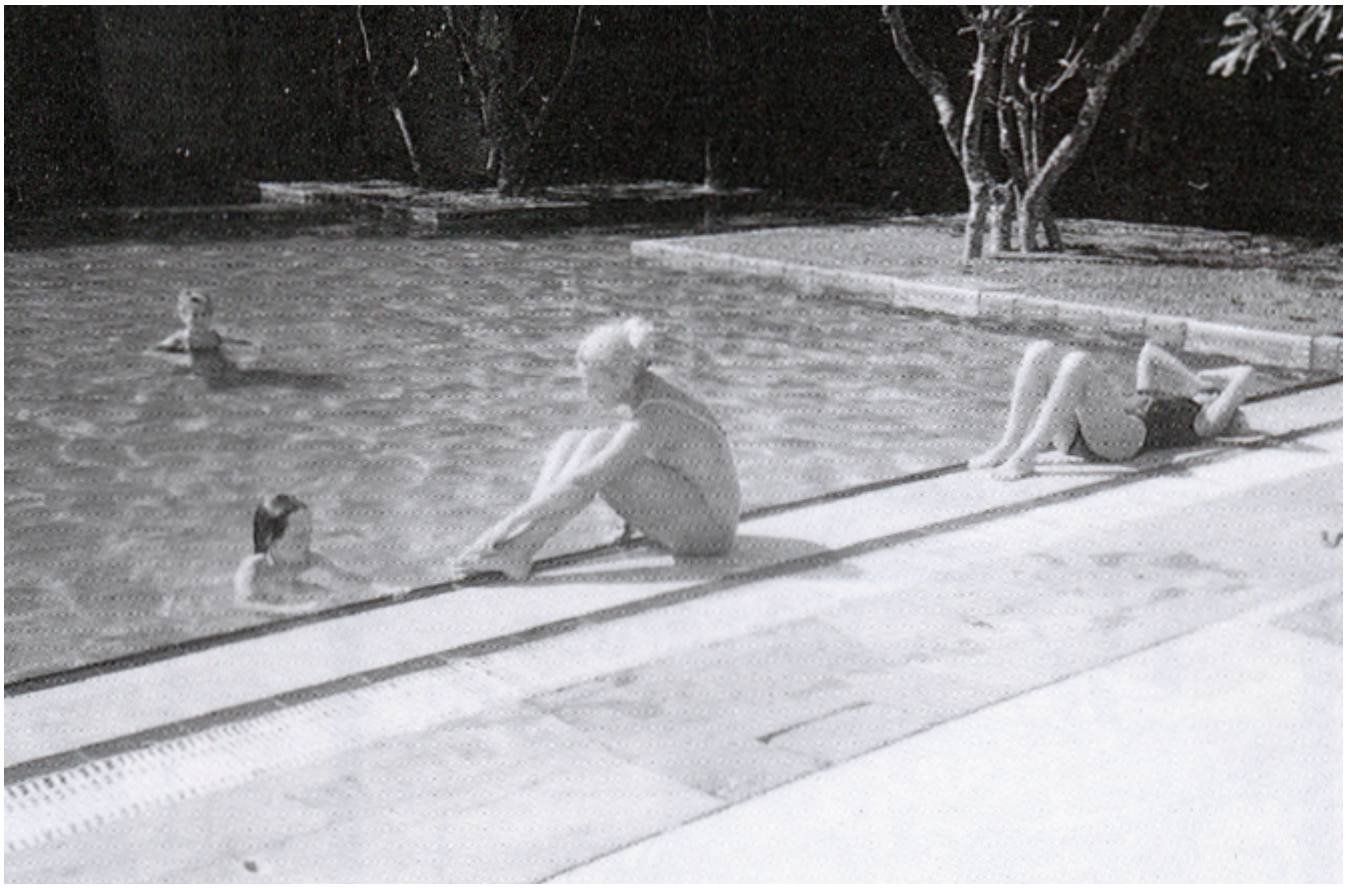
Have a Healthy Holiday

Posted on



You are assured of a pleasant and healthy holiday in Sri Lanka but you should take basic health precautions so you can keep fit to enjoy your stay with us.

Health care starts before you come here. You will require inoculation against yellow fever if you are coming here from an infected area (such as· parts of Africa), and cholera precaution is a wise one. If you haven’t had time for a jab, you can get one from the General Hospital, opposite Hayley’s Building in Colombo.

Weekly or daily doses of anti-malaria tablets are the usual treatment to avoid malaria. Malaria is contracted through mosquitoes. To prevent mosquito bites you

are strongly advised to use mosquito nets, burning coils or electric mats. These exude a mosquito repellent and consume a negligible amount of electricity.

The nervous need not worry about being bitten by poisonous snakes since you are unlikely to meet one in urban or holiday areas. In Sri Lanka, many ayurvedic doctors (indigenous medical practitioners) use a kind of stone known as snakestone to apply to the wound caused by a snake. This stone drains the venom. Queen Elizabeth is believed to carry a snakestone in her medical kit.

Rabies can be caught from dogs, cats and even from tame monkeys. The golden rule is not to pet pets, however cute they look. It you are bitten by any animal, immediately seek medical help. A course of anti-rabies vaccine injections together with anti-tetanus protection is the only remedy. If you follow this advice you have nothing to fear.

Be cautious when sun bathing. A tanned and glowing skin which may be the envy of others may spell danger, according to dermatologists. While a dose of vitamin D from the glaring sun may be just what the doctor ordered, too much of it can lead to sunstroke, sunburn and skin cancer.

Manifestations of over- exposure to the sun’s rays are lassitude and irritability, giddiness, sickness, general discomfort, acute physical fatigue and fainting attacks.

These are the results of lack of vasomotor (nerve) control of the circulation resulting in hypotension (lowered blood pressure) with the heart pump becoming incapitated and unable to maintain adequate circulation of blood. This occurs commonly soon after entering a hot climate and is provoked by excessive physical exertion prior to first becoming acclimatized. The middle aged are particularly the most susceptible, whereas the young can get away with a lot, if they are physically fit.

To prevent heat stroke, take adequate rest and lots of fluids prior to physical exertion in the sun and avoid physical exertion during the hottest hours, between 11.00 and 14.00 hours.Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun, sang Noel Coward, under-scoring the evils of over-exposure to the sun’s rays with his satire. Until the last few decades, colonists from the west, particularly the English, wore hats to avoid the burning sun in the tropics. It is still advisable to cover up sensitive areas. such as bald pates.

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of hygiene. What the average tourist must be wary of are the wayside snack bars and restaurants. Aerated waters such as brand name colas and soft drinks are the safest if you have to drink where the water (and the water used for the ice in your drinks) hasn’t been boiled. Or try the water of a king coconut fresh from the nut. We call it thambili.

Avoid eating cold salads and snacks at doubtful places. If you are compelled to dine where you are doubtful about hygiene, cooked meals and hot drinks are your best bet.

As long as you are sensible, you will probably leave Sri Lanka looking much better than when you arrived. Enjoy your holiday!