



## Health Benefits

*“Voyage, travel, and change of place impart vigor.”*

*Seneca, 1<sup>st</sup> Century philosopher*

Taking vacations can improve health in several measurable ways. For example:

- An annual vacation can cut a person’s risk of heart attack by 50 percent.<sup>25</sup>
- Middle-aged men at high risk for coronary heart disease who take frequent annual vacations are 21% less likely to die of any cause and 32% less likely to die of their coronary heart disease.<sup>1</sup>
- Homemakers who vacation only once every six years or less have almost twice the risk of developing myocardial infarction or coronary death than do homemakers who take two or more vacations a year.<sup>2</sup>
- Blood pressure, heart rate, and levels of epinephrine – a stress hormone – decline on holidays of only one or two days.<sup>3</sup>
- Recuperation and improvement in exhaustion are facilitated by free time for one’s self, warmer (and sunnier) vacation locations, exercise during vacation, good sleep, and making new acquaintances, especially among vacationers reporting higher levels of work stress.<sup>7</sup>
- Travelers rate their overall health one full point higher (on a scale of 1 to 5) while on vacation. They also get three times more deep sleep after their vacation and sleep almost 20 minutes longer after their vacation.<sup>26</sup>
- Leisure has been found to contribute to overall well-being by helping people maintain both their physical and mental health.<sup>6</sup>
  - For example, a study of almost 20,000 Canadians showed that physically-active leisure has been found to directly contribute to higher levels of physical and mental health – especially during times of stress. Higher levels of participation in physically-active leisure – and travel is definitely physically-active leisure – also helped people suppress high levels of work stress.<sup>4</sup>
  - Another study of Canadians showed that there are long-term health benefits of using leisure as a coping mechanism during stressful times.<sup>5</sup>