



Sailing the ocean blue is usually much safer than flying, railroading and driving. However, whenever a ship has a rare, but highly-publicized accident or passenger sickness problem, it can frighten seniors away from cruising.

Cruises are very attractive to seniors, because once aboard, everything is conveniently just a few steps away. You experience entertainment, pool, spa and unlimited fine dining. When visiting ports, there are excursions, shopping and other diversions.

Those pleasures can be even more enjoyable when you're totally aware of personal safety throughout your cruise. We hope these tips may help make your next sailing an untroubled, pleasant experience. Take all daily meds: Check with your physician before you sail and be sure you're packing the correct prescription meds. Stock up for double the number of days of the cruise. This allows for unexpected delays that could keep you from running out of meds.

In case of emergency illness or injury aboard and ashore, carry proof of insurance, Medicare and other applicable IDs. If you take special electrical and other equipment, be sure it's in good working condition and with supplies to last beyond the cruise.

Your life aboard the ship: Be aware of ramps and metal decks. Wear comfortable clothes and rubber-soled shoes for safety. Be comfortable with cabin features, such as bathroom, life vest, security and storage.

Lifeboat drill: Memorize your cabin number and location, and how you get to it from stairways, elevators and passageways. Info is posted inside the cabin, along with instructions for lifeboat drill and location of your on-deck lifeboat station. When at your lifeboat station, heed info given by crew members in charge.

When it's not a drill: Be prepared if a real emergency happens, and you hear the ship's siren alarm. Leave your cabin quickly with life jacket on securely. Keep wallet, jewelry, keys and other valuables on you or ready to take at a moment's notice. Several times throughout your cruise,

practice going to your lifeboat station from other areas of the ship.

Maintain health and awareness: You'll enjoy food and drink, with continuous buffets and other dining from early morning to midnight. Heavy drinking and overeating too many rich foods while on a rocking ocean can result in seasickness even in the most experienced senior sailor.

When the ship docks in foreign ports, be careful of water and food offered, especially from street vendors. Take bottled water ashore with you, and be sure everything you eat has been thoroughly cleaned and cooked.

For personal safety ashore, always be with at least one companion, and confine sightseeing to daylight in well-populated areas. Leave major cash and jewelry locked in your cabin safe, and carry ashore only money you expect to spend that day. Keep camera, purse and wallet close to you in locked purse or pockets, and be alert for street crimes and other unexpected dangers.