



## ROAM THE GNOME Family Travel Directory

# The Ultimate Guide to Avoiding Bali Belly

This information is given as a guide only. Consult your doctor before leaving Australia if you have any concerns.

Bali Belly is that revolting illness that gives you serious tummy cramping pain and diarrhoea, and can lead to dehydration. This Travellers Diarrhoea also goes by the name Montezuma's Revenge, Delhi Belly, Peru Poops, Tourist Trot, and the Jamaican Runs. Bali Belly in children poses a serious risk of dehydration and potential consequences.

Bali Belly is caused by improper hygiene and a lack of environmental sanitation. These circumstances allow harmful bacteria such as E. Coli to spread. Travellers can get Bali Belly by ingesting unhygienic food, exchanging money, and from eating undercooked or raw food or salads that have been washed with contaminated water. Drinking, or swimming in, contaminated water can also lead to Bali Belly if water gets into the mouth or nose. Harmful bacteria enter your digestive system by these means, and set off a chain reaction. As children touch everything in sight, and transfer these germs to their mouth and nose, the risks increase.

The symptoms of Bali Belly vary from person to person but generally include:

- Abdominal bloating, cramps and pain.
- Nausea and/or vomiting.
- Urgency/frequency in going to the toilet.
- Diarrhoea.
- Mild temperature.
- General malaise (weakness or discomfort)
- If you or your children pass blood with the diarrhoea, or have bad stomach cramps or a fever above 38C, DO NOT take any anti diarrhoea medication. See a doctor immediately.

Bali Belly usually lasts between one to five days, with loose watery stools and mild stomach cramping usually improving by the second day. Some people experience a slight rise in temperature, nausea, or vomiting. But in general, other than 'cramping' your holiday style, most people find their body is good at overcoming this illness quite quickly without much intervention. Prevention is way better than cure though.

Tips to Avoid Bali Belly:

While not 100% foolproof, these tips will definitely put you and your kids on the right track to prevent Bali Belly.

1. Washing hands before and after every meal, and after each toilet visit, is key. (If you can't wash them, use hand sanitiser). Remind your kids often.
2. Boil tap water for at least 10 minutes before drinking it. If you can't do that, drink bottled water only.
3. It's safe to enjoy hot drinks such as tea and coffee, and drink pre-packaged drinks such as bottles and cans of soft drink, fruit teas etc, but wipe down the bottle and the lid before you do.
4. (Only buy drinks from a refrigerated cabinet, not from an esky where the drinks may have been sitting in non-hygienic ice)
5. Avoid salads that may have been washed in contaminated water.
6. Always peel your own fruit (or wash it in bottled water)
7. Look at the state of the restaurant before entering - if it's busy (especially with other tourists), and the staff and surrounds are clean, it's likely to be a good place to eat.
8. Ask for referrals from your friends and family as to the best places to eat in Bali.
9. Only eat fresh, hot food. If it's lukewarm, send it back. Don't risk it.

10. If it looks dodgy, don't eat it.
11. Avoid seafood entirely. The exception to this is eating seafood in well-established commercial restaurants.
12. Brush your teeth with bottled water only.
13. Keep your mouth closed when showering. For kids under 8, we recommend the bath only. Remind the kids NOT to drink the water.
14. Many frequent travellers to Bali recommend drinking a Yakult every morning, and swear by Pocari Sweat or Mizone sports water drinks for rehydration.
15. Buy a few travel-sized bottles of hand sanitiser. Thankyou have a Antibacterial Lemon & Lime Hand Sanitiser with Aloe Vera & Vitamin E. It's fairly natural and smells better than other brands we've used too.

The Bali Motto You Need to Remember:

You can't go wrong with this bit of advice: "Boil it, cook it, peel it, open the bottle yourself... or forget it"

#### The burning question - Is it safe to have ice in my drinks in Bali?

For years, the basic advice in Bali has been to refuse ice in drinks, as the ice may have been made with contaminated water. However, local laws in Bali now mandate that hotels and established restaurants and food outlets must use commercial hygienic ice cubes at all times. So if you are eating at a well-known restaurant or chain such as McDonalds or Bubba Gumps, or staying in a quality hotel, it's fine to take ice in your drinks.

We suggest avoiding ice in warungs, roadside stalls, and those popular pop-up "bars on the beach". Buy your bottled drinks from refrigerated cabinets only. Never drink from a bottle that has been cooling in an ice box - that ice is highly likely to be unhygienic, and it's too easy for potential germs to spread.

#### Is Bali Belly contagious?

To be on the safe side, assume yes. Be very careful when cleaning up after children's vomit and diarrhoea to avoid being the next one struck down. Wash your hands with hand sanitiser regularly.

#### Bali Belly Prevention Medication

We pack a fairly substantial first aid kit of medicines for Bali (and other hot, humid or populated places like it, including Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, India, Peru, and South America where the language barrier, and proximity to a good doctor or hospital may not be the same as home).

When in Bali, we drink a Yakult probiotic everyday as a Bali Belly preventative. Find them in the local minimarts and supermarkets.

We also take ONE or the other of the natural medicines listed below in our Bali First Aid Kit. We start taking the tablets three days BEFORE we arrive in Bali to lay the foundation of gut health.

*Travelan* - a clinically proven natural medicine that adults take with meals to help PREVENT Bali Belly. Travelan is not indicated for use in children under 6 years of age except on professional health advice however the active ingredient has been approved for use in children over the age of 12 months. If you choose to use it with young children, Travelan suggests breaking the tablet in half or give it as a powder. Travelan must be taken before EVERY meal, **OR**

*Ethical Nutrients "Travel Bug"* - This natural medicine reduces the risk of diarrhoea and relieves/treats diarrhoea in both adults, and children from 3 months old when travelling. Store it in the hotel or villa fridge. Travel Bug is taken once a day.

#### Roam the Gnome's Bali Belly First Aid Kit - the List of Things to Take to Bali

These are the things we bring from home.

- Apple Blackcurrant Hydralyte Electrolyte Oral Rehydration Tablets
- Kids Panadol/Nurofen
- Buscopan for relief from cramping pain - for adults and children over 6 only. Read the safety leaflet before use.
- Mintec Peppermint Oil Capsules for natural relief from cramping pains - for adults only. Not recommended for children
- Imodium or Lomotil - for diarrhoea in adults and children over 12 years
- Chamomilla homeopathic pistules for digestive and stomach upsets and diarrhoea. Safe for adults and children.
- Nux vomica homeopathic pistules for nausea, vomiting, and travel sickness. Safe for adults and children

#### How to get rid of Bali Belly - the Bali Belly cure for kids and adults.

The best Bali Belly cure is rest and rehydration. But no-one wants to waste a day or two laid up in their hotel room or villa when there's adventures to be had, so it's time to bring out our list of the top Bali Belly remedies we've found.

- Sip lukewarm herbal teas such as Ginger, Camomile, or Peppermint tea. Avoid milk in tea.
- Drink bottled water. Maintaining your fluid intake is vital.
- Put a packet of Rehydration Tablets in your first aid kit- it's essential. We take Apple Blackcurrant Hydralyte Electrolyte Oral Rehydration Tablets with us. These are scientifically formulated to replace water and electrolytes lost due to vomiting, diarrhoea, heavy sweating, and vigorous exercise. Drink this as soon as possible to reduce the chance of dehydration.
- In Bali, you can also buy isotonic sports drinks like Gatorade or Pocari Sweat from the local convenience stores (Circle K, Alfamart, Indomaret, or the bigger supermarkets such as Carrefour or Bintang.)
- Homeopathic remedies may be your only alternative for vomiting children under 12, and stomach pain in children under 6. We carry a Homeopathic First Aid kit everywhere just in case and use the appropriate remedies.
- Adults can take medication to relieve vomiting and diarrhoea. (See our Bali Belly first aid kit)
- A popular remedy for locals and expats in Bali is to take Norit Activated Charcoal tablets as a remedy for diarrhoea and food poisoning. They can be found in most minimarts and also at the apotek (pharmacy). Activated charcoal tablets are a natural product that absorb toxic substances in the gastrointestinal tract. Normal dosage is five to eight tablets taken three times a day. For adults only.

#### The Post Bali Belly Diet

For kids (and adults too), it's time to go back to the BRAT diet - that's basically Bananas, Rice (plain white or brown), Applesauce, Toast. It's a well-known remedy for dodgy tummies. Dry toast with a scrap of butter is a cure-all and something we still remember from childhood.

You can also add:

- Breads – specifically plain toasted breads
- Pastas
- White potato
- Yogurt
- Flat lemonade
- Ginger candies
- Stay away from all other dairy products, street food, and fruits including peaches, pears, prunes, plums, apricots, and stone fruits.

After a bout of Bali Belly, the best cure is to eat plain and simple for the rest of your trip.

#### Chemists in Bali

In Bali, there are two main chemists. Guardian pharmacies can be found in the major towns and tourist areas. Kimia Pharma is the other chemist chain. But you can find Balinese chemists (drugstore, pharmacies, 'apotek') all over the place. Common medicines and remedies for Bali Belly can also be found in or near the large supermarkets such as Bintang, Carrefour, and Matahari.

When in doubt, see a doctor

If you or your children do not seem to be getting better within a day or two, or you have concerns, see a doctor at the local BIMC hospital. It's where the expats go when they need to see a doctor as it has a reputation for being clean and professional. Both the BIMC hospitals and the International SOS clinic are western owned and operated, and are well located for access from Kuta, Nusa Dua and Sanur.

Here is the list of hospitals recommended by the Australian Consulate too.

<http://bali.indonesia.embassy.gov.au/blli/medical.html>

#### Bali Belly After Returning Home

If you experience Bali Belly diarrhoea for the first time after you return home, or it continues, see your doctor. Be sure to tell them you recently returned from Bali, and ask them to organise tests. Your doctor will identify the cause of the illness and provide you with appropriate treatment.