**YGT episode 164**

You're listening to you've got this episode 164. Welcome to you've got has a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life. I'm your host doctor Katie Linder. On this episode. I want to talk about a topic that is near and dear to my heart right now.

And that is staying healthy while traveling in the past several months and in kind of a five-month period I have had nine trips which equated to more than 25 flights and lots of Hotel time lots of handshaking depending on who I knew on these trips some hugging as well. And lots of being in spaces where I didn't always control the cleanliness of the space, you know, when I was in a hotel or on a plane and also some food circumstances that I couldn't control so I thought I would talk on this episode about kind of the importance of trying to focus on your physical health and your mental health when you're traveling and offer some things that might be good suggestions if you are also traveling during this season, Now for me, this is a conference season and also a speaking season.

So I'm kind of going back and forth between doing kind of normal conference presentations, but then also doing some keynoting and the interesting thing about the keynoting is that you get put up in front of a large group of people and so you get approached by a lot more people at conferences and I was at a conference recently where I keynoted the first session and so that meant everybody from the very beginning of the conference knew who I was.

And then I stayed for the remainder of the conference. So I had a lot of people approach me a lot of people wanting to shake my hand and you know, those kinds of things and conferences as we all know are kind of the worst places for germs to spread. You're not getting great sleep. You're maybe not eating what you normally eat and it is like a perfect storm for getting sick.

So here are some things that might be useful to think about if you are going to conferences going to hotels being on planes and doing a lot of traveling in the season. So one thing that I try to do is basically not touch things that I don't need to touch. So for example things like the hotel TV remote the tray on the plane the armrests on the plane the phone in the hotel things that I feel like people would be, you know other people would be touching but wouldn't necessarily be cleaned are things that I try to avoid if I can.

I also when I'm traveling in part because I get cold on planes. I wear fingerless gloves and this allows me to hold on to things but not necessarily touch them with my hands and then I try to wash those fingerless gloves in between trips. So it's kind of maybe a false layer of security but between me and germs but it does help me to feel like I'm not putting my skin directly on a lot of the things that I need to touch when I'm.

I always make sure to wash my hands before I eat anything when I'm at a conference. And this is one that can be kind of hard to remember because there's just so much going on and sometimes you're rushing from one thing to another and if you're going out to a meal it's not always something that you would remember to run and wash your hands really quick.

But this is something I really try to do. I also try really hard not to touch my face or put my hands near my mouth. And this is a little bit challenging for me because I am someone who when I'm stressed out I buy my cuticles and so I'm trying to keep my fingers out of my mouth is it's a habit that I have and it's a habit.

I've tried to break for a long time. But this is something that I try to be really careful about when I'm. Also, I think that we get off our routines and we can forget to do things like brushing our teeth, which is also something I think they can help to clear out bacteria and just make sure that you're you know not having unnecessary germs.

So making sure that you're brushing your teeth twice a day or more depending on kind of what your routine is there. And I also think that taking vitamin C or other kinds of protective vitamins that you would normally take during a cold or flu season. This is something that can be really helpful.

The other thing that I find I often get off my routine and I need to be really careful about is also taking my regular meds. So I've mentioned in a previous episode I take medication for anxiety twice a day. And when I'm traveling it's really easy for me to forget so I have a routine now of like where I put that medication I take it out as soon as I get to my hotel room.

I try to have my partner remind me because we usually talk right before I go to bed. So he'll say have you taken your meds tonight? So those kinds of things helped me to kind of make sure that I'm doing that and for my own mental health, it's really important that I keep those meds consistent. So that's something else that I think is it's easy to forget if you're off your normal routine.

To stay healthy. I also try to bring snacks that work for me. It is very common for me to have a conference meal. We're either all or part of it. I can't eat and because I'm on kind of a specialized diet right now. I'm doing a low FODMAP diet. That means I have to avoid things like. Garlic and onions and certain foods that are just in just about everything and it's very hard to describe to a conference organizer what I can and cannot eat.

So if I don't have control over a meal situation, I will often bring things to supplement some kind of protein Source like nuts or something that I feel like will be filling like a gluten-free oatmeal or something like that. And then if I do need to go out later and get food, I will. So this is something else that I think making sure that you're getting nutrients and nutrients that are similar to what you would normally get.

So your body is not like wait what's going on here? This is all very foreign to me. That's something that I'm really trying hard to do when I travel. Now one of the most important things that I do is to plan a reasonable conference schedule and this includes breaks between sessions and also for me it includes having meals alone.

So at this most recent conference that I was at where I was keynoting. I had two dinners by myself at the end of the day, I would go for a walk. I ended up walking to a local Whole Foods. And I just eat by myself and it was great one of the nights. I called my sister and we caught up a little bit and it was just really nice to have that down time where I wasn't kind of on and engaging with people at the conference and as much as I really love kind of networking and talking with other people because I'm introverted.

I really do need that time to reset so building in those times to my conference schedule is really important. And then I think along with that is to not expect too much. In terms of other work that you're going to try to get done when you're at that conference or while you're traveling because it just adds on this extra layer of pressure and also guilt if you don't get it done, so I'm really trying to pull back on the kinds of things that I'm expecting for myself to get done during those periods.

I try to plan ahead as much as I can for the travel to prep things to make it really easy to release podcast episodes and things like that. And I think that when you do get extra. Done during that time then it just feels like a bonus. So really thinking ahead about what I think is reasonable for me to do looking at the conference schedule building and some buffer time in between sessions and maybe even layering in time for like an afternoon nap.

If it's been a really long conference later on in the conference. Maybe I'll take some time where I skip a session and just go back to my room to rest. All of these things are I think helpful to keep me from getting sick. Okay, so there's several more one is to stay hydrated. So at the conference is I've been at lately.

I've noticed that a lot of people are bringing their own water bottles or some kind of warm drink container for tea or coffee and then refilling that at the break stations throughout the conference. I think this is a great idea. The other thing I typically do which is not super great for the environment.

But I as soon as I land at a conference, I will typically walk to like a local Walgreens or CVS Pharmacy or whatever is available and I'll go buy bottled water to store in my room. I don't like drinking tap water. Especially in a city that I'm not familiar with and even in my own home, I drink filtered water.

So I like to go out and get bottled water and make sure that I have that available at all times so that in the morning I try to drink quite a bit before I get going and recently I was at a conference in Denver where if you've been to Denver, you know, the altitude can really effect. Your hydration it's very dry there.

And so I was having a drink even more than normal and just having that water in my room made me know that I was going to have it available at any time that I needed. I think it's also really important when you're traveling and especially when you're at a conference hotel or a Convention Center to get some fresh air at conferences.

You can spend your entire day inside and never leave the hotel. And so I really tried to leave the hotel at some point, especially for a meal or somewhere where I can get a walk and because I'm trying to move throughout the day and get still get my 10,000 steps. This is a helpful way for me to do that and get outside.

I also try to plan for the weather so I can still do that. So recently when I was in Denver, it did Snow while I was there and so I had to be prepared for that in other places. I've been it's been really really hot. So it can be, you know hard to kind of find that Frazier time outside, but I do think it's really important.

Okay, so like I mentioned I do try to get some exercise and move around which I think is also really helpful. When I go to conferences. There's a lot of sitting time where you're listening to people and you're not always moving around so I do try to get in my 10,000 steps at a minimum while I'm traveling it's easier to do on Airport days because I'm walking around airports a lot but on days where I'm at the conference if I can get in an early-morning workout at the hotel gym, I do try to do that.

Okay, so this is probably the hardest one for me, but I do think it makes a huge impact when I am traveling. I really try to limit sugar now. This is something that I do all the time anyway, but I also find that when I'm traveling I try tend to get like a little bit of a. You know, like I need a treat because I'm away or because it's been kind of a stressful time or most recently at this conference.

I went to when I keynoted. I was celebrating the fact that the keynote went well and I got a little treat at Whole Foods and sugar just never makes me feel good and maybe there's a short boost right after I have it but the long-term effects are never good and I do think that it lowers my immune system.

So when I'm traveling I try really hard to avoid. Any form of sugar especially processed sugar if I can? Okay, a couple more things one is to get as much sleep as you can. I feel like sleep is the ultimate healer. It is so important to staying healthy and this includes naps. It also includes sleep in the evenings.

Obviously when you're going to bed at night. I do try to go to bed early when I can at my most recent conference in Denver. We did have around 9:30 one night at the hotel was evacuated for an emergency. And so that cut into everybody sleep a little bit, but I think. If you can build in as much sleep as possible, it is really important.

And if you are someone who can sleep on planes that's a great way to do it as well. But I've also found and I've been really careful about this especially in this travel season that I'm trying to plan as much downtime as possible. Between my trips so that I can make sure that I have at least one day on the weekend where I can sleep in or I can get in an afternoon nap on the weekend or I'm doing early bedtimes during the week to make sure that I'm really doing some recovery time from just the extra stress that you're putting on your body when you're at these conferences.

Okay, a couple other things that I do are I tried to book flights that aren't horrible timing like really early departures or really late at night arrivals. Now when I'm going to and from the East Coast this is really difficult to do and so what I try to build in is either staying at a hotel by the airport the night before if it's a really early departure or having someone.

Drive me home if I get in really late and I'm fortunate that my partner is a night owl and so he does a really nice job of coming and getting me at the airport of it's late and even just from my most recent trip because I had one night where I didn't sleep very well right before I left by the time I got in I really wasn't functional.

Like I really needed him to drive me home because I was. Very tired. I had kind of bonked at the end of the night and I hadn't eaten very well that day and I you know, I just really needed someone else to kind of get me home and I went straight to bed as soon as I got home. So knowing what your limits are and planning ahead I think is a really important thing to do.

Okay, so. What if you do get sick while you're traveling? This is an important thing to cover as well. This did happen to me. I think it was last summer, maybe the summer before and you'll probably remember because I had to take some time off of the podcast. It was like doctor's orders that I had not work for a week while I was recovering and I got a really bad kind of sinus infection and I wasn't able to fly and.

I hope that never happens again, but it has given me some good ideas of what I need to do when I'm traveling just to make sure that I'm covered in case something does happen. So one of the things is to bring some medication when you travel and the stuff that typically helps me are things like Advil Sinus medication cold and flu medication or just knowing where you can purchase those things if you need them.

And if I start to feel any kind of not well, I immediately go and get this because I don't want to wait till the point where I don't feel very well and then I have to go out and track this stuff down. So if I don't have it on me by the time I'm starting to kind of feel even like a whiff of not not feeling well and you know that feeling like you get in your sinuses or you start having headaches or your body is starting to feel a little bit tired.

I will immediately go and kind of see if I can track down some things to help me out. I think it's also important to know what you can skip if you need to so looking ahead at your conference schedule finding the things that you think are the most important for you to be there. Obviously if you're presenting or keynoting or something like that you need to be present for that.

But if there are other things that you could skip to take a nap or just to rest in your room, sometimes it's enough to just be horizontal for like 30 minutes and just let your body get a little bit of extra energy. Those things can be really helpful. And then I also think it's important. If you are to the point where you are pretty ill most hotels have a doctor on call and this is something that I didn't know except several years back.

I had a colleague who got sick at a conference and I learned that the hotel had a doctor and they came and saw her and gave her, you know some medicine and kind of helped her feel better. And when I was sick a couple years ago or whenever it was over the summer, I did call the hotel doctor and I did find out kind of what my local resources were if I did need to go and see a doctor and get a prescription or something like that.

So just knowing that that is a resource I think is really helpful, especially if you're pretty far away from home and you're questioning whether or not you're able to fly and this was a big question for me when I was sick before I wasn't sure how it would impact my sinuses because they were. I kind of having such a problem.

I didn't want to go on a plane if it was going to make it significantly worse. And so I ended up staying a couple extra days where I was and then coming home and then I was down for another week, maybe 10 days before I could go back to work. So I think that, you know don't mess around this stuff is.

Can get pretty serious and you want to make sure that you're taking care of yourself and that you can get yourself the resources that you need and our health is so important that we really want to protect it and make sure that we are being as healthy as we can. So those are just a few of my tips and knock on wood.

I am not sick yet in this travel season. I'm hopeful that I will be able to stay healthy. I hope all of you are staying healthy as well. And even if you're not traveling maybe some of these tips apply to your work environment because it is the season right now to be getting colds and flus and some of the stuff might apply to to just hanging around at your work.

So I would love to hear if there are other strategies you have for staying healthy during the travel season. You can always email me at hello a doctor kitty litter.com. You can tweet to me at Katie double underscore lender. You can connect with me on Instagram @ KD underscore lender, or you can always write me a letter at 1621 Albany Oregon nine seven three two one.

Anyway, you contact me. I always love to hear from you. Thanks so much for listening. Thanks for listening to this episode of you've got this show dogs and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie Linder dot work / podcasts. If you found this episode helpful, please also consider rating and or reviewing the show in iTunes.

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