Jet Lag

What is jet lag?
Jet lag is what we call the adjustment period travellers often feel after quickly crossing several time zones. Symptoms of jet lag include feeling tired, having a hard time sleeping, not feeling hungry, confusion, changes in bowel habits, and headache. Symptoms may last for about one day for each time zone crossed and gradually get better with time.

Who is at risk for getting jet lag?
Jet lag is most often experienced by travellers crossing 3 or more time zones in one trip. The more time zones crossed, the higher the chance of experiencing jet lag. Studies show that eastbound travellers are more likely to suffer severe jet lag than westbound travellers.

How can I prevent jet lag?
Before the flight:
• Plan flight times to minimize sleep loss or adjust sleep patterns to match destination times.
• Schedule arrival during daytime hours to ensure alertness when clearing customs, arranging accommodations and transportation, etc.
• Talk to your family doctor about short-acting sleeping pills for use during flight or upon arrival at your destination.
• Minimize how much food, alcohol, and caffeine you have right before you travel.

During the flight:
• Drink lots of water, juice, or other non-alcoholic beverages.
• Stretch and take short walks in the aisle every hour.
• Try to sleep during your destination’s night time hours.

After the flight:
• Do not plan demanding activities for the day you arrive.
• Follow your destination’s time as much as possible on the day of arrival so you can sleep and wake at local times.
• Give yourself time to get some fresh air and exercise.