

FOREIGN TRAVEL ADVICE .PLEASE READ INFORMATION BELOW AND SEE THE WEBSITES FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY HEALTH RISKS, THEN BOOK A TRAVEL APPOINTMENT WITH THE PRACTICE NURSE. PLEASE BRING DETAILS OF PREVIOUS VACCINATIONS TO YOUR APPOINTMENT IF POSSIBLE.

Travel Health Advice

This is a general advice sheet and should be used in conjunction with more detailed information which can be gained from the websites below and your consultation with a health professional.

Travel can be an exciting and valuable experience and it is important to consider your health and any precautions you can take to ensure you remain well whilst away from home.

Visiting Friends and Relatives (Especially If Outside Europe)

People who have moved from another country to live in UK will rapidly lose their immunity to many of the diseases in their home country. People in this group are at higher risk as they may travel to areas not usually visited by tourists, are more likely to eat and drink the local food and drinks without caution, and assume they still have resistance to insect borne disease such as malaria. People travelling to visit relatives must also remember that their children will not have immunity to the local diseases, and may benefit from vaccination before travel.

Business Travel

Many business travellers will travel for short but frequent trips. It is wise to check the validity of your vaccinations- and destination requirements before each trip. Some countries require a Yellow Fever certificate and may prohibit entry to the country without it. Frequent travellers can become complacent and the years pass without realising that the vaccinations are out of date. Insect born disease can be seasonal and regional, so checking about malaria protection etc. before departure is vital.

Travel with Children

Children require special consideration with all aspects of travel. Protection against sunburn, food and water borne disease, insect borne disease and rabies risk should all be considered. There is a specific advice sheet on the Fit For travel website which is worth reading. (Link below)

Pregnant Travellers

Air travel is restricted for certain times in pregnancy, and there is increased risk of thrombosis. Please seek advice before undertaking long haul travel in pregnancy. Malaria risk is greater in pregnant women than in other people and the choice medication for malaria prophylaxis is limited. Consideration must be given to medical provision in your destination country if there are problems with the pregnancy whilst away from home. (Insurance cover needs to be good).

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General Disease Prevention Considerations:

Food and Water

Infections caused by contamination of water and food include diarrhoea and vomiting, Hepatitis A, Typhoid and cholera. Contamination may be due to a poor water supply and poor sanitation, by infection in the food handling staff or poor storage or preparation of the food etc.

Use of bottled water reduces risk, provided that it a sealed bottle. Use this for cleaning teeth as well as drinking. Avoid ice in drinks unless certain it is made with safe water.

Eat in crowded cafes or restaurants not empty ones. Choose food that is piping hot or can be peeled or self-prepared. Avoid buffet food if it has been kept warm or standing at room temperature for prolonged periods of time. Beware of shellfish unless it has been thoroughly cleaned and freshly cooked.

Diarrhoea can be a problem caused by unfamiliar foods, or in more severe cases, by infection. It is the body's way of removing the infection, so it is wise to allow it to pass naturally over 1-2 days. Avoid dehydration by using rehydration solution (available in powder sachets from pharmacies- advisable to take some in your suitcase). Care with hygiene is vital to avoid spread to others. If essential, Loperamide may be used to stop diarrhoea, but it results in the infection remaining in the body for longer and you may feel ill for longer. Always seek medical advice if diarrhoea is accompanied by severe abdominal pain, blood is present, you have high fever, or if it continues beyond 2 days. Seek early advice if a baby or young child is affected.

Sun

Long term skin damage can be caused by sunburn .Protect skin by covering up and by using good sunscreen creams. This is especially important with children. Remember to apply frequently, as swimming and sweating washes the cream off. Also remember that cool breezes, cloud and water do not block the sun rays, and may cool the skin but do not prevent burning.

<http://www.sunsmart.org.uk/>

Rabies

Many countries have a risk of rabies in the animal or bat population. Vaccination may be advised for people who may be unable to access medical help within 24 hours if bitten or scratched by an animal. Remember family pets may not have been vaccinated. (please read Rabies information on www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk).

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Insects

Insects can give irritating painful bites, but in many countries also spread life threatening disease. Malaria, Yellow Fever, Japanese Encephalitis are some of the vaccine preventable diseases. Ticks can cause encephalitis. Some insect borne disease cannot be prevented with vaccination and a good quality insect repellent is strongly advised for some destinations (this needs to be used liberally as with sun screen creams). Choose one with at least 30% DEET content if possible.

Blood and Sexually Transmitted Disease

HIV and Hepatitis B and C are transmitted in this way. Some countries have a high prevalence of these in their population. It is important to be aware of the risk and avoid contact. It is inadvisable to have tattoos or piercings performed unless certain that it is safe to do so. Vaccination is available against Hepatitis B and pre travel consideration should be given to this if planning an extended trip.

Vaccination Costs

The NHS covers the cost of some vaccinations- where the risk from an infected person returning to the UK could cause infection to others. Some diseases are not transmissible in the UK, so protection against these is not covered, and there will be a charge for the vaccination or prescription. (Examples of vaccines not covered by NHS include Yellow Fever, Meningitis groups ACWY, Rabies.) Payment for these will be required prior to ordering the vaccine.

Useful Web Links

Prior to booking your appointment for travel health advice/vaccinations, (and possibly prior to booking the holiday) some of the websites below may provide valuable information about your destination, and information about the diseases.

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

www.nathnac.org

www.sunsmart.org.uk/

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

www.travelclinic.ltd.uk/ (local private clinic for complex itineraries).