
THE HEALTH CENTRE, MOUNT STREET, DISS, NORFOLK IP22 4WG
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Patient Leaflet:

Travel advice and vaccination services

This leaflet sets out the travel advice and vaccination services provided by the Parish Fields practice for patients registered at the practice and private patients from the surrounding areas.

If you intend to travel abroad, especially to developing countries, it is important to see the practice nurse in good time for your vaccination. When you make the decision to travel abroad, you should complete the enclosed health form and drop this into the surgery, a nurse will then contact you and will be able to make you an appointment to come in and discuss your requirements; it is usual for this to take three days, as the nurse researches what you will need. The reason we ask you to fill in the form first is that travel advice is changing all the time and we want to provide you with the most up to date information.

Travel vaccination appointments must be made at least four weeks before your departure; we may not be able to help you if you do not book your appointment in sufficient time.

The nurse will give you advice on immunisations and malaria protection when you attend your appointment. If your trip involves a complex itinerary it is advisable to contact the Hospital for Tropical Diseases helpline on 09061 337733 for advice, they will send you an information sheet and this should be brought with you to your appointment.

Please note that there is a fee for non-NHS vaccinations and travel prescriptions provided by the surgery. The reception staff will be able to advise you of our current fees.

If you are a private patient and are seeking advice only, but no vaccinations, there will be a fixed fee of £17.00 to cover the cost of the consultation time.

You will be asked to pay by cash or cheque after each appointment with the nurse.

Vaccinations

HEPATITIS A

Where -	Worldwide
How -	Dirt born virus swallowed following oral/faecal contamination
Consequences -	Temporary liver damage. Can cause yellowing to the skin/eyes; itching and tiredness, which can persist for weeks or months.
Vaccine -	Single booster doses or two starter doses, separated by 6 – 12 months
Suitable -	All ages
How -	A single booster or second starter dose should protect for 20 years +.

DIPHTHERIA

Where -	Worldwide
How -	bacterium in air-borne water droplets or through direct skin contact
Consequences -	Poison coating to throat, causes choking; in severe cases can be fatal.
Vaccine -	Sometimes given together with tetanus vaccine.
Suitable -	For all ages
How -	A single dose in adults who have had the “childhood” course. Should protect for 10 years.

POLIO

Where -	Worldwide
How -	Virus typically in dirty food or water
Consequences –	Withering of limbs, breathing difficulties; in severe cases can be fatal
Vaccine -	By injection with tetanus and diphtheria
How -	A single dose in adults who have had the “childhood” course. Should protect for 10 years.

TICK-BORNE ENCEPHALITIS

Where –	Europe, Russia, China
How –	Bite from infected tick
Consequence –	Brain damage, disability; in severe cases can be fatal
Vaccine -	By injection
Suitable –	For adults and children over 2 years of age
How –	Three doses; 1 st now, 2 nd in 1 to 2 weeks, 3 rd after one month. Protection given for three years.

JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS – please note that we are only able to administer this vaccination between 10 and 11.30 and 15.00 and 17.00 – this is for your safety as a Doctor needs to be on the premises when your vaccination is administered and for half an hour after your vaccination. (you will be required to remain at the Practice for half an hour after this vaccination).

Where –	Primarily Asia
How –	Bite from infected mosquito
Consequence –	Brain damage, disability; in severe cases can be fatal
Vaccine -	By injection
Suitable –	For age 18 months +
How –	Three doses; 1 st now, 2 nd in 1 to 2 weeks, 3 rd after one month. Protection given for three years.

YELLOW FEVER

Where –	Most african countries including Nigeria, Ghana and Botswana
How –	Bite from infected mosquito
Consequence –	Internal bleeding, kidney failure, meningitis; in severe cases can be fatal
Vaccine -	By injection
Suitable –	For age 9 months +
How -	By injection that has to be administered 10 days before travelling. Vaccine provides 10 years of immunity

HEPATITIS B

Where –	World wide. Particularly widespread in the Far East and Africa.
How –	Pass through bodily fluids – blood, semen, blood transfusions, body piercing, tattooing, sexual intercourse.
Consequence –	Cirrhosis, cancer of the liver; in sever cases can be fatal
Vaccine -	By injection
Suitable –	For all
How -	Course of three injections, taken on day one, day seven and then between days 21 – 28. Vaccine last for ever, but it is advisable to have booster jabs every five years.

MALARIA PROPHYLAXIS

Where –	Africa, South America and Asia
How –	Bite from infected mosquito
Consequence –	In severe cases can be fatal
Vaccine -	Tablets
Suitable –	For all
How –	Depending on prophylaxis prescribed, generally starting before travel, taken during duration of stay and then continued on return to non malarial region.

Travel advice

Water

Diseases can be caught for drinking contaminated water, or swimming in it. Unless you know the water supply is safe where you are staying, only use (in order of preference):

1. boiled water
2. bottled water or canned drinks
3. water treated by a sterilising agent

This includes ice cubes in drinks and water for cleaning your teeth.

Swimming

It is safer to swim in water that is well chlorinated. If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean, avoid swimming in fresh water lakes and streams. You can catch a parasitic disease called Schistosomiasis from such places. This disease is also known as Bilharzia. It is wise not to go barefoot, but to wear protective footwear when out, even on the beach.

Food

Contaminated food is the commonest source of many diseases abroad. You can help prevent it by following these guidelines:

- Only eat well cooked fresh food
- Avoid leftovers and reheated foods
- Ensure meat is thoroughly cooked
- Eat cooked vegetables, avoid salads
- Only eat fruits you can peel
- Never drink unpasturised milk
- Avoid ice-cream and shellfish
- Avoid buying food from street vendor's stalls

Animal bites

Rabies is present in many parts of the world. If rabies is not treated, death is certain.

There are three rules regarding rabies:

1. Do not touch any animal, even cats and dogs
2. If you are licked on broken skin or bitten in a country which has rabies, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for 5 minutes.
3. Seek medical advice immediately, even if you have previously been immunised.

Air travel

It is sensible on any long haul flight to:

- Be comfortable in your seat
- Exercise your legs, feet and toes while sitting every half hour or so and take short walks whenever feasible. Upper body and breathing exercises can further improve circulation
- Drink plenty of water and be sensible about alcohol intake which in excess leads to dehydration

Avoid being bitten – Insect/tick bites

Mosquitoes, certain types of flies, tick and bugs can cause many different disease. Some bite at night, but others bite during the day.

- Cover up skin as much as possible if going out at night, (mosquitoes that transmit malaria bite from dusk until dawn). Wear light coloured clothes, long sleeves, trousers or long skirts.
- Use insect repellents (containing DEET or eucalyptus oil base) on exposed skin, clothes can be sprayed with repellents too. Impregnated wrist and ankle bands are also available. Check suitability for children on the individual products.
- If a room is not air conditioned, but screened, close shutters early evening and spray room with knockdown insecticide spray. In regions where malaria is present; if camping or sleeping in unprotected accommodation, always sleep under a mosquito net impregnated with permethrin. Avoid camping near areas of stagnant water, these are common breeding areas for mosquitoes etc.
- Electric insecticide vaporisers are very effective as long as there are no power failures!
- Electric buzzers, garlic and vitamin B have not been found to be effective.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

If you have casual sex, the risk of infection with a sexually transmitted disease is high. It is difficult to be sure about the risk of HIV infection in different parts of the world. However, it is clear that the infection is widespread and although the risk is high amongst homosexual and intravenous drug using groups in 'Western' countries, on a global scale it is primarily a heterosexually spread disease. Remember that casual sexual intercourse is risky. Condoms provide good but not complete protection.

Medical, dental and other procedures

If you are planning to have a medical, dental or other procedure such as ear piercing, acupuncture or tattoos, you need to be aware of possible risks to your health.

- Unless you are absolutely certain that the equipment being used is sterile, skin-damaging procedures should be avoided (this includes manicures, pedicures and shaving with open blades)
- In many developing countries re-use of medical supplies, including needles and syringes, is common. Travel packs are available from some chemists and online. These kits contain sterile injecting equipment for use in an emergency (e.g. where skin cuts need suturing, an intravenous drip or injections are required, or for dental surgery). These needle kits are normally supplied with a certificate showing contents and the reason for its purchase; this is useful for customs clearance – don't forget to put it in your hold luggage and not your hand luggage.

- Blood transfusion – in most of Western Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia, all donated blood is now screened for HIV antibodies. However, in most developing countries there may be only the most basic blood transfusion services and much of the blood donated is unscreened. The risks from blood transfusion in such circumstances are high.

Sun damage to the skin

Although sunbathing may be enjoyable, it must be remembered that excessive sun exposure is a health hazard due to the effect of ultraviolet (UV) radiation to the skin.

Precautions –

- Babies under nine months should be kept out of direct sunlight
- Children should wear long sleeved, loose fitting shirts, hats and high-factor sunscreen
- Adults should wear a broad brimmed hat, long sleeved shirts and sunglasses

Sunscreens –

- Sunscreens do not replace the precautions described, but they can help absorb UVB and to a lesser extent UVA
- To gain effective protection a cream with an SPF value of 15 or above should be used
- Sunscreens need to be regularly reapplied during the day

Advice for gap year travellers

We know that you are no different from anyone else, but it will probably be the first time that you have travelled independently abroad. All the information in this leaflet applies to you, but, if you are staying in places for more than 30 days, the advice that we give you may be different to if you were going for less than 30 days; what we do is look at the risks that you are exposed to.

So a quick recap, and a few extras to help you stay safe.

- Get decent travel insurance and make sure it covers everything you're planning to do (sometimes it costs extra for activities like snowboarding or diving). Make sure that it includes medical insurance and repatriation if you become sick while you are away.
- Leave enough time for your vaccinations. Depending on where you're going, you might need between 3 and 6 months to get all your jabs.
- Don't drink the water if you're advised not to. Don't brush your teeth in it either. You can buy water purifier kits if you're going somewhere remote.
- Be aware that even in Western countries, you can still get traveller's tummy. If you do, make sure you rehydrate yourself (you can buy rehydration powders).
- Get a mosquito net and lots of mosquito repellent containing at least 50% DEET. Your malaria pills will protect you against malaria, but it's best to avoid getting bitten in the first place.
- Keep your skin out of the sun – use a hat, sunblock etc. Apart from protecting you from burning, it will help stop you getting sunstroke.
- Most importantly, adopt a positive attitude. Many people get a bit ill whilst travelling, but the vast majority recover quickly and suffer no long-term effects.
- If you're taking medication for an existing condition (eg diabetes, epilepsy), get a doctor's note before you travel, and keep a scan of it in your e-mail account.
- Don't lose control: If you get wasted then you're not going to be able to deal with any situations that might come up.
- Be aware that your drink could be spiked
- Always let someone at home know your travel plans: Keep them regularly updated via email or phone calls.
- Look after your belongings: Take a padlock to secure your rucksack with and use a waist wallet for documents and money. Ideally, a waist wallet should be worn against the skin for total concealment. Try not to have to access a waist wallet when you are in a public place, especially in a bus or train station.
- Research the country that you will be visiting: Get to know in advance the areas that you should beware of, the different cultural rules that apply to dress and public behaviour and try to familiarise yourself with the language to some degree.
- Take at least the following: plasters and antiseptic wipes, painkillers, travel sickness treatments, sunscreen, diarrhoea, treatments (including rehydration), mosquito repellent, malaria medication (if needed).
- Talk to the Practice Nurse about safe sex and contraception.