



Inca Trail

The following information must be viewed as a guide only. It is not intended, nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Specific recommendations on vaccinations, antimalarial medications & targeted travel health advice are always provided on an individual basis taking into account:

- the personal health of the traveller including past medical & vaccination history;
- intended activities;
- precise itinerary;
- style of travel;
- type of accommodation;
- time of year;
- altitude; &
- length of stay.

As well, some vaccines eg rabies & tuberculosis are very much influenced by local disease risk. Specific face-to-face advice is particularly important when recommending antimalarial medications & those for presumptive treatment, eg. for travellers diarrhoea.

We strongly recommend travellers seek an appointment with a doctor trained in travel health prior to departure.

Medical & nursing staff at The Travel Doctor-TMVC are trained in international public health issues with a focus on immunisations & preventive medicine. Many have travelled extensively & a number have worked in less developed areas of the world for extended

periods. Travellers should undergo individual risk assessments whether they are short term holiday makers, business people or the long term expatriate worker. The Travel Doctor-TMVC has clinics Australia wide. In Australia the local centre may be contacted on 1300 658 844, or by visiting www.traveldoctor.com.au. It is recommended that you visit a travel health professional 6-8 weeks prior to departure. However, if that time frame is not possible, remember – 'It's never too late to vaccinate'.

Healthy Travelling in Inca Trail

The Inca Trail is a popular trek that is either undertaken on its own or as part of a trip to Peru & Bolivia. The walk usually takes four days & demands a reasonable level of fitness. Along the Trail there are Inca ruins, mountain scenery, cloud forest & subtropical jungle & the walk ends at the former citadel of Macchu Picchu, the most visited tourist attraction in Peru.

Pre-travel preparation will help keep you healthy while you are away. The table below provides a brief description of some of the major travel health concerns & vaccinations that should be considered when visiting the Inca Trail.

We hope you find this information useful in preparing for your trip. Remember it is advisable to consult a travel health specialist prior to departure.

It is important to make sure that routine immunisations such as Tetanus & Diphtheria are up-to-date, to check whether Yellow Fever vaccination is required, & to consider other vaccinations like Hepatitis A & Typhoid depending on individual risk.

Major Travel Health Issues & Considerations for Inca Trail

Altitude sickness	Altitude sickness can affect people not used to breathing the thinner air at high altitude. It is a risk for travellers walking the Inca Trail. Severe altitude sickness can be life-threatening & may require medical evacuation. It is important to allow enough time to acclimatise before walking the Inca Trail, & to ascend gradually during the walk to reduce the likelihood of altitude sickness. In some situations, medication can be used to assist the process of acclimatisation.
Chickenpox	This very common infectious disease can be prevented through immunisation. Many people miss the disease in childhood only to have a more severe illness as an adult. Travel puts one at higher risk of exposure. If there is no history of having had the illness, a blood test can confirm whether one is at risk.
Cholera	Cholera is a severe diarrhoeal disease caused by a bacteria. It is common in developing countries & is associated with conditions of poverty & poor sanitation. Cholera can cause rapid & severe dehydration. Travellers to the Inca Trail who follow the rules of eating & drinking safely will minimise their risk. There is also an oral vaccine available for cholera which may be recommended in certain circumstances.
Dengue Fever	Dengue (pronounced den-gee) Fever is a viral disease with flu like symptoms that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Outbreaks occur in Peru, particularly in larger cities & towns during the wetter months of the year. There is no vaccine for Dengue Fever & prevention is based on avoiding mosquito bites using repellents, nets & insecticides.
Hepatitis A	This is a viral disease of the liver which is transmitted through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. It is the most common vaccine preventable disease that occurs in travellers to less developed areas of the world. It is strongly recommended for travel to Peru.
Hepatitis B	This is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or bodily fluids. It is vaccine preventable. Hepatitis B immunisation is now part of the childhood immunisation schedule. Many adult travellers have missed this very important immunisation & travel may be a good reason for vaccination.
Influenza	Individuals intending to travel out of an Australian winter might consider the current flu vaccine at the beginning of the season. Exposure to flu at airports & in other crowded places is common & becoming unwell can ruin a much needed break. In fact, influenza is likely to be the most common vaccine-preventable disease faced by travellers.
Measles, Mumps & Rubella	These diseases are more common in countries where childhood immunisation coverage is not as high as in Australia. Travellers born during or after 1966 should check that they have either had measles or else 2 doses of measles vaccine. Since 1989 this may have been as the combination MMR (measles, mumps & rubella) vaccine. Those born before 1966 are likely to have long-term immunity from natural exposure during childhood.



Rabies	Rabies is a deadly viral infection of the brain transmitted from animals to humans. The disease is rare in travellers but the risk increases with extended travel & animal contact. The best way to prevent rabies is to avoid all contact with animals. Dogs are the main carriers; however monkeys, bats, cats & other animals may also have the disease. Pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for extended travel & those who work with, or are likely to come in contact with, animals.
Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria	Tetanus is caused by a toxin released by a bacteria commonly found in dust or soil, which enters the body through a wound. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the throat & occasionally of the skin. It is found worldwide & is spread from person-to-person by coughing & sneezing. Pertussis (Whooping Cough) is a highly-infectious respiratory infection responsible for 300,000 deaths annually, mainly in children. Diphtheria & pertussis vaccines can be added to the tetanus vaccine. Because many adults no longer have immunity from childhood vaccination, travellers to less developed countries are advised to have a tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis booster.
Travellers' diarrhoea	Up to 40% of tourists may develop 3 or more loose bowel motions a day within the first week of travel. A variety of germs can be responsible for this infection & drinking unclean water is a cause of illness in people walking the Inca Trail. A traveller's medical kit containing appropriate therapy can rapidly improve symptoms. The oral cholera vaccine has been shown to provide protection against some forms of traveller's diarrhoea.
Typhoid Fever	Typhoid Fever is caused by a bacteria found in contaminated food & water. It is common in the developing world & vaccination is recommended for travellers to areas where environmental sanitation & personal hygiene may be poor. The adventurous eater venturing 'off the beaten' path should certainly consider vaccination.

Altitude sickness can occur on the Inca Trail because there is less oxygen at high altitude. Severe altitude sickness can be life-threatening. Travellers should be aware of the symptoms of altitude sickness & allow themselves time to acclimatise before beginning the walk. Medication can be used to speed-up acclimatisation in some situations. This should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure.

Sunburn is more common at high altitude. Travellers should protect themselves by wearing appropriate clothing & using sunscreen with a high sun-protection factor.

Travellers' diarrhoea caused by drinking unclean water from streams or rivers can occur when walking the Inca Trail. Drinking boiled or bottled water is safest. Otherwise, it is very important to purify any water from these sources using chemicals or filters before drinking.

Bites from mosquitoes, sandflies & other insects cause considerable annoyance and, sometimes, infections like dengue fever or leishmaniasis. There is no vaccine for these diseases. Visitors to the Inca Trail should avoid bites by wearing appropriate clothing & using repellents, nets & insecticides.

Yellow Fever vaccination is required of all returning travellers who have visited high-risk areas in Peru. While it is not specifically required for the Inca Trail, the need for Yellow Fever vaccination should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure if any other region may be visited during the trip.

Malaria is found in lower-lying areas of Peru in & around the Amazon Basin. Malaria risk & prevention options should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure if additional travel is planned to these or similar areas in the rest of South America.

Additional fact sheets can be found at www.traveldoctor.com.au

These include fact sheets about:

- eating & drinking safely;
- avoiding insect bites;
- managing jet lag;
- safe sex;
- managing travellers' diarrhoea, and;
- Travellers' Medical Kits.

smartraveller.gov.au
A must see destination.

Remember to check the DFAT 'Smartraveller' website www.smartraveller.gov.au prior to departure



medibank
HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Travel Health Fact Sheet **Inca Trail**
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1300 658 844 or visit www.traveldoctor.com.au