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If you missed any previous editions of Travel Health News, they can be found in the Travel Industry section of our website.



Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2010. This year we hope to bring you regular up dates on health issues occurring around the world that are likely to affect you and your clients when travelling. We look forward to your in put and welcome any questions or ideas that you may have. With the new year now in full swing, we'll be reverting back to the monthly publication of Travel Health News – so the next edition will be coming out in late March.

A one-stop-shop

Our clinics are one-stop-shops where our trained & experienced staff ensure that your clients get value for money & do not end up getting unnecessary vaccinations & costs that can occur at less specialised services. In addition - we keep all required vaccines, other medications & a range of other travel health on-site in our clinics.

A common misconception we frequently encounter is that "it's easier to just go to my own Doctor". In the great majority of cases, an individual's GP will not however stock travel vaccines, or medications. Which then means a trip to the pharmacy to have a script filled - & then another trip back to the GP to have vaccines administered (as Pharmacies can't yet administer travel vaccines).

Planning a holiday, or getting organised for an overseas work trip is complicated & time consuming enough. Why make it anymore difficult for travel health preparation with multiple trips to a Doctor & Pharmacist!

HEALTH ALERTS SUMMARY

What's happening around the world

At The Travel Doctor-TMVC several of our most experienced doctors continually research & publish health alerts that are of relevance to Australian travellers. In each edition of this newsletter we'll provide you with a summary of the most recent travel health alerts:

Feb 12 – Imported Measles in QLD

Feb 10 – Avian Influenza Update – Egypt, Cambodia, Myanmar

Feb 04 – Measles in South Africa

Feb 01 – Increased bird flu activity

Jan 26 – Rabid raccoons, Central Park, NY

Jan 08 – Rats, bats & rabies (QLD)

Dec 22 – New bird flu case in Cambodia

Dec 22 – Cholera in PNG still spreading

Dec 07 – Dengue Fever in Florida

Please see our website www.traveldoctor.com.au for more travel health alerts.

HEALTH FEATURE

Commonwealth Games – India October 2010

With its colourful festivals, wonderful culture & amazing food India is a popular destination for a growing number of travellers. With the XIX Commonwealth Games to be held in New Delhi in October we will see an even larger number of Australian travellers going to this fabulous destination.

As with any densely populated country there will be a number of health concerns that need to be addressed, therefore visiting your local travel health expert before undertaking this trip is essential.

Preventative vaccinations for Hepatitis A, Typhoid & Cholera as well as many more diseases can be given but learning how to stay safe is just as essential. Ensuring water is safe to drink by checking seals on bottle caps or treating the water ourselves & choosing to eat food that has been well cooked or peeled will assist in keeping healthy while away. Eating from street vendors & buffets increases risk & can prove costly afterwards.

Chikungunya, Dengue, Leishmaniasis & Filariasis are just a few souvenirs you do not want to be bringing home with you. These diseases are passed through insect bites & there is no preventative vaccination available. Regular use of a good insect repellent with at least 30 – 40% DEET is required.

While reading & talking about the vast range of diseases & infections that can be picked up while travelling can make the trip sound very scary, being prepared & knowing how to protect ourselves & treat minor injuries & illnesses can ensure we are able to relax & enjoy our trip fully. So make sure you visit a travel health professional at the Travel Doctor-TMVC before experiencing the wonderful sights, smells, sounds & culture India has to offer.

Specific recommendations on vaccinations, antimalarial medications & targeted travel health advice is 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.

For any travel, the currency of your basic immunisations such as Tetanus & Diphtheria should be checked & others like Hepatitis A & Typhoid considered according to the criteria mentioned previously.



Taj Mahal



The Indian Flag



Table 1 provides a brief description of some of the major travel health issues & considerations that should be considered for travel to India.

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 India.
Hepatitis B	This is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted via 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. The vaccine is currently provided to all children as part of our childhood immunisation program.
Typhoid	Typhoid Fever is caused by a bacteria found in contaminated food & water. It is endemic 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.
Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria	Tetanus is caused by a toxin released by a common dust or soil bacteria, which enters the body through a wound. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the throat & occasionally of the skin. It is found world wide & is transmitted 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 immunisation it is advised that travellers to less developed countries have a tetanus, diphtheria & pertussis booster.
Measles, Mumps & Rubella	Childhood immunisation coverage in many developing countries is not good. As such, travellers under the age of 40 years should have their measles, mumps & rubella immunisation complete. Those over the age of 40 years are most likely to have long term immunity from previous exposure as a child.
Chickenpox	This very common infectious disease can now be prevented through immunisation. Many people miss the disease in childhood only to have a significant illness as an adult. Travel puts one at higher exposure & if one cannot elicit a history of having had the illness a test can show whether at risk.

For a more detailed Fact Sheet on India or other countries please see our website www.traveldoctor.com.au/dfactsheets.html.

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Look out for our email Swine flu updates, also available on our website.

Poliomyelitis	<p>All travellers to developing countries should be up to date with vaccination against polio. Poliomyelitis is a viral infection that can lead to paralysis & sometimes death. Transmission is by faecal contamination of food, usually by unhygienic food handlers or flies, or directly from infected nasal secretions. Although most Australian's & New Zealanders will have been immunised in childhood, it is important to note that efficacy wanes after 10 years & a booster dose is recommended if travelling to a country where the disease is still found, such as India.</p>
Malaria	<p>Malaria is transmitted by a night biting mosquito. The decision to use or not use anti-malarial drugs should be made after consultation with a travel health specialist, taking into consideration the relative malaria risk of areas on the traveller's itinerary as well as potential side effects and cost of available drugs. The risk is low in Delhi, Mumbai, Agra, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad, but increases in Calcutta, Goa and central rural areas especially after rain. The risk remains high all year in Assam. Insect avoidance measures should be followed throughout the trip. Upon return, any flu like illnesses should be investigated by a travel health specialist.</p>
Dengue fever	<p>Dengue (pronounced den-gee) Fever is a viral disease with flu like symptoms that is transmitted by mosquitoes. There is no vaccine for dengue fever and prevention is based upon insect avoidance via repellents, nets and insecticides. The mosquito is a day time biter and the risk is greatest in urban areas.</p>
Meningitis	<p>Meningitis is an inflammation of the membrane overlaying the brain. It can be caused by bacteria, a virus or a fungus. Bacterial meningitis is the form of most concern to travellers. It is a serious disease & can rapidly become life threatening. It is transmitted from person-to-person through close contact (ie droplet infection – the same way you catch a cold). Vaccination might be considered for those backpacking off the beaten path, in northern India or those working in health areas where crowded conditions occur.</p>
Japanese Encephalitis (JE)	<p>JE is a mosquito borne viral disease prevalent in rural areas of Asia & Indonesia that can lead to serious brain infection in humans. Risk is usually greatest during the monsoon months. A vaccine is available & is particularly recommended for adults & children over 12 months of age who will be spending a month or more in rice growing areas of countries at risk (or who repeatedly visit such areas). It is also recommended for people travelling to an area where an outbreak is known to be occurring. Insect avoidance should be considered the primary means of defence.</p>



Beautiful attractions



Local farmers

continued... Table 1 provides a brief description of some of the major travel health issues & considerations that should be considered for travel to India.

Rabies	Rabies is a deadly viral infection of the brain transmitted to humans. The disease itself is rare in travellers, but the risk increases with extended travel & the likelihood of animal contact. The best way to avoid rabies is to avoid all contact with animals. Dogs are the main carriers, however monkeys, bats, cats & other animals may also transmit the disease. Pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for extended travel & those who work with, or are likely to come in contact with animals.
Cholera	Cholera is a severe, infectious diarrhoeal disease caused by a bacteria. It is common in developing countries & is associated with conditions of poverty & poor sanitation. Cholera causes severe & rapid dehydration. Travellers who follow the rules of eating & drinking safely will minimise their risk. There is also a new oral vaccine available for cholera which may be recommended under certain circumstances.
Traveller's 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 & a Traveller's Medical Kit containing appropriate therapy can rapidly improve the symptoms. It is also important to follow the rules of healthy eating & drinking to minimise risks.

Please see our website www.traveldoctor.com.au for more travel health alerts.

NEWS

Prescription Drugs “over the counter”

Within Travel Doctor-TMVC, we operate a forum via which all of our Doctors & Nurses swap information about interesting cases, or critical information that they think the entire network should know about. Recently, one of our senior doctors has recounted the tale of a traveller in India who purchased “anti-malarial drugs” over the counter for use as a preventive medication.

While the identity of the drug is not certain it probably was a drug now known to be ineffective because of a high degree of resistance. In addition, the dosage advised was inappropriately high & bizarre for any type of anti-malarial medication. In short – while this traveller thought he was thus protected against malaria – he was actually at risk of acquiring it as the medications he purchased were useless!

This experience repeats a lesson that we have mentioned many times in the past. Take precautions before you leave for travel. You may not be able to rely on prescription medications purchased over the counter in other countries. However cheap, they might be the wrong drug, the wrong dosage or might even be bogus.

HEALTH FEATURE

Whiz Freedom

The Whiz Freedom lets females urinate when you can't access a toilet or don't want to sit on the toilet seat. Perfect for travel to countries where bathrooms are not as we know them.

Whiz Freedom is made from medical grade ultra soft and flexible plastic. It is impregnated with a fluid-repelling hydrophobic agent, an anti-fungal agent and an antibacterial agent. Sparing no expense for your hygiene and peace of mind Whiz Freedom is the world's most hygienic urine director.

It's carefully and cleverly designed lily shape bends to fit comfortably to the outer curves of the human body, no matter what size or shape. It is externally held against the groin. Urine is directed away from the body and lands a respectable distance from your shoes. There are no flow backs, splashes or spills, you don't even have to remove outer or under clothing. The Whiz Freedom preserves dignity and liberty what ever the circumstances giving you the choice to urinate wherever and whenever you choose.

The Whiz Freedom has been used for years by female explorers and adventures around the globe. It has helped female climbers reach the summit of K2, Mt Kilimanjaro, many peaks in the Andes, the Rockies and in some of the most challenging terrain Australia and New Zealand have to offer.

For your Whiz Freedom visit your nearest Travel Doctor-TMVC clinic today and enjoy the freedom and hygiene while you travel.

NEWS

Benefits & Services for You...

We recognise that you travel as well. Like everybody else, you need to look after your own health while travelling. We provide all travel health services to bone fide travel industry staff at Medicare only prices & significant discount on all your vaccination & travel health product requirements. Come into one of our clinics & experience what your travellers do, the best advice & professional services in our dedicated travel medicine clinics.

Remember this is your newsletter, so please do let us know if there are specific topics you would like covered. Email your questions & requests to AskTheTravelDr@traveldoctor.com.au

We have clinics Australia wide. For other clinic locations please see our website www.traveldoctor.com.au or for your nearest clinic call **1300 658 844**.



No toilets - no problem!



Significant discounts for bone fide travel industry staff on vaccination & travel health products!



FAQ's Monthly Feature

Q: I've heard about the risk of blood clots on long flights. How can they be avoided?

A: The risk of a clot, or deep vein thrombosis (DVT), is low but it can be a serious medical problem.

Some people are at greater risk than others. Those who:

- are travelling longer than 12 hours
- are over 40 years of age
- have family history of abnormal clotting
- have cancer
- have had recent major surgery or illness
- are pregnancy or within 6 weeks post delivery
- are travelling with a plaster cast
- are overweight
- have previously had DVT

High risk travellers need to visit a doctor before they go – compression stockings may be indicated and there are modern anticoagulants available. Aspirin is not very good at preventing venous clotting and it can be dangerous if used in some individuals.

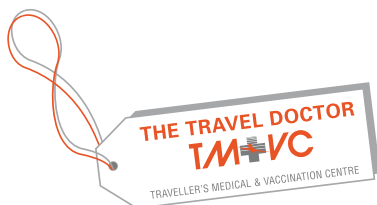
For the average traveller, the following measures are worthwhile to reduce your risk

- Keep active during your journey. Have an exercise routine while seated. Check out the guide in the airline literature.
- Keep your fluids up. Minimise dehydration by drinking 2 or 3 glasses of water per sector. Keep your alcohol and coffee intake to a minimum, both are dehydrating.
- Ensure there is nothing pressing on your calf muscles.
- Sedatives should be avoided during travel since they may limit your activity and increase your risks of falls.

For more information about Deep Vein Thrombosis and how to have a **safe and healthy journey** check out The Travel Doctor website www.traveldoctor.com.au or phone **1300 658 844** to contact your nearest Travel Doctor-TMVC Clinic.

Please feel free to submit any questions you may have and we will do our best to answer them for you.

Disclaimer: Information provided in this this newsletter & associated health columns is of a general nature & should not replace specific advice from your own personal Travel Doctor-TMVC consultation.



Are you a high risk traveller?



Keep active on your journey!