

Patient Information Leaflet - Travel

Thank you for discussing your travel plans with our practice nurse. It is during this discussion that hazards specific to your destination will have been identified and advice given.

Why do I need pre travel health advice?

A pre travel consultation does not just involve injections. In fact the majority of hazards faced by travellers abroad are not prevented by vaccines. The pre travel consultation identifies hazards and provides you with the opportunity to discuss how these risks can be reduced. Examples include:

- Food & water hygiene
- Insect bite avoidance
- DVT (traveller's thrombosis)
- Traveller's vomiting & diarrhoea
- Travel insurance

The benefits of the pre travel consultation

- Up to date verbal & written advice on a range of travel health issues
- Information about recent disease outbreaks
- Travel health vaccinations, malaria tablets and other medications.

Any traveller planning a trip outside the UK should discuss their travel plans with our practice nurse. Generally the risk of infectious disease is greater in resource poor countries; however certain advice will be applicable to all travellers regardless of their destination.

Some groups of patients may be at higher risk from diseases e.g. babies, young children, the elderly or those with pre existing medical conditions.

All travellers are advised to be up to date with their Diphtheria, Tetanus & Polio vaccinations.

The practice nurse will have completed a "risk assessment" with you based on the information you give in your consultation. It will of identified hazards related to your destination and planned activities, and provided you with individualised advice.

Ideally you should make your travel appointment 6 – 8 weeks before you travel.

Please note short notice travel assessment appointments may not be available. However in these circumstances we will refer you to a local travel clinic

Vaccinations

If you are travelling outside the UK you may need to be immunised against some of the serious diseases that are found in other parts of the world. Immunisation can help protect you against becoming infected with a disease.

Your vaccinations will remain effective if given well in advance. However, a vaccination given at any stage will provide better protection than none at all, so please get in touch even if you have only a few days before your trip.

The information below talks you through our process at Arden Medical Centre and any fees or charges that you may incur obtaining vaccinations.

The nurse will advise if you need any vaccines that are not provided on the NHS.

***Please note that all chargeable vaccinations must be paid for before administration.
We accept cash or cheque***

What vaccinations are offered at Arden Medical Centre?

Only certain vaccinations are provided on the NHS. Non-NHS vaccinations include (but are not limited to)

- Rabies
- Tick-borne Encephalitis
- Japanese Encephalitis
- Meningitis ACWY
- Hepatitis B

Patients will be responsible for all costs associated with these vaccinations

If you would like this information in an alternative format or you need help communicating with us, please let us know

Vaccination costs

Rabies (course of 3 vaccinations) £175.00

Hepatitis B (course of 3 vaccinations) † £ 99.00

† - Hepatitis B - GPs **do not** provide an occupational health service for Hepatitis B as part of their NHS responsibility nor can they provide this service to you even if it is funded by you.

Men ACWY £25.00 (admin fee)

We require payment before vaccination (cash or cheque) & these costs are non-refundable. Upon payment the relevant vaccination will be ordered & we will contact you to make follow up appointments for the vaccination course

We are not able to provide vaccination against Yellow Fever

Malaria Tablets

Our Nurses will advise you if malaria tablets are required for your trip. We will provide a private prescription for malaria at a charge of £10 (per patient).

Additional Patient Information – Students

Students are usually registered with a GP at University. If students require travel vaccinations it is advisable to have them done at University before returning home.

However, if this is not possible you can register as a temporary patient at the surgery.

- Students need to attend a travel assessment consultation
- Payment will be required (as detailed above)
- As the Practice will not be your usual GP surgery we will not have access to your full medical records. Therefore we can only give advice on the basis of the information you give us on previous vaccinations, allergies, illness etc
- It is the Student's responsibility to record what vaccines we administer, so you can update your GP. Requests for copies of your vaccination records will be charged for.

General Travel Advice

Water

Diseases can be caught from 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 never to go barefoot, but to wear protective footwear when out, even on the beach. Other diseases can be caught from sand and soil, particularly wet soil.

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 fruit you can peel
- * Never drink unpasteurised milk
- * Avoid ice cream and shellfish
- * Avoid buying food from street vendor's stalls

Two phrases to help you remember:

1. Cook it, peel it, or leave it!
2. When in doubt, leave it out!

Animal Bites

Rabies is present in many parts of the world. If rabies is not treated, death is 100% certain.

There are 3 rules regarding rabies:

1. Do not touch any animal, even dogs and cats.
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 been previously 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 an 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.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Blood Borne Infections (including HIV)

If the traveller indulges in 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.

If you would like this information in an alternative format or you need help communicating with us, please let us know

Precautions to take:

1. Casual sexual intercourse is risky. Condoms provide good, but not complete protection.
2. Unless you are absolutely certain that the equipment being used is sterile, skin-damaging procedures such as ear piercing, tattooing, acupuncture, manicure and shaving with open razors should be avoided.
3. In many developing countries re-use of medical supplies, including needles and syringes, is common. Travel packs are available from some chemists and travel clinics, containing sterile injecting equipment for use in an emergency (e.g. when skin cuts need suturing, an intravenous drip or injections are required or for dental surgery). These needle kits should be supplied with a certificate showing contents and the reason for its purchase, useful for customs clearance.
4. 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 risk from blood transfusion in such circumstances is high. Thus, points to consider are:
 - ❖ accidents are the commonest reason for needing a blood transfusion
 - ❖ blood transfusion should only be accepted when essential.

Sun Damage to the Skin

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

Precautions:

- ❖ Babies under 9 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 above but they can help absorb UVB and to a lesser extent UVA.
- ❖ To gain effective protection a cream with an SPF value of 30 or above should be used.

Flight advice

Most people can fly with no concerns but passengers who suffer from heart disease, lung disease, cancer, or have a family history of DVT or are recovering from a recent operation should consult their doctor prior to any flight.

The real risk of developing DVT remains extremely low but we would advise you follow the guidelines listed below.

Take plenty of exercise, even before you fly. One tablet of aspirin on the morning of the flight helps reduce the stickiness of the blood and decreases the risk of a clot developing, but consult your doctor first.

On board a few regular, simple exercises in your seat will help the flow of blood, and buy a pair of special elastic stockings to wear during the flight. These promote the flow of blood through the veins.

Drink plenty of water during the flight to dilute the risk of a clot developing and don't drink too much alcohol.

Medical Guidelines:**❖ Ear problems**

If you suffer from sinusitis, an infection of the middle ear or other blockage it is advisable not to fly until the problem has been resolved to avoid the possibility of experiencing severe pain.

❖ Heart Disease

Consult your doctor. You should certainly not travel within 21 days of a heart attack.

❖ Angina

This is not normally a problem provided the condition is stable and attacks are infrequent.

❖ Diabetes

If you have insulin dependent diabetes there is no reason why you cannot fly although it would be wise to consult your doctor about your insulin management regime.

❖ Recent Surgery

Flying is not normally advisable for 21 days after abdomen, chest or middle ear surgery.

❖ Neurological Disorders

Epilepsy doesn't normally create a problem although travel would be restricted within 24 hours of a *grand mal fit*. You may also fly 21 days after a stroke provided symptoms are stable and your condition is improving. Be guided by your doctor.

❖ Pregnancy

It's not a medical condition but in the interest of pregnant travellers' welfare, travel is normally restricted up to 28 weeks without a doctor's letter and 34 weeks with a doctor's letter.

Please contact the surgery if you have any queries – 01564 739194

Useful websites - <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>

<http://www.nathnac.org/travel/>