

TRAVEL HEALTH

ADVICE



Manor House Surgery

Travelling abroad, whether on business or for pleasure should be well planned to avoid potential health risks for you and your family.

BEFORE YOU GO

Visit the websites below to research your travel vaccination requirements and then contact the surgery to request a travel form. Once this has been completed, hand this back to the receptionist and they will book this into a 10 minute 'Administration' slot. The nurse will look through your form and decide about what vaccinations you need to travel. You will then be called to book a face-to-face appointment where the nurse will confirm your requirements, give you any required vaccinations that are available through the NHS and provide further information as appropriate. Please note that appointments should be booked at least **6 weeks prior** to travel.

- ✓ www.masta.org
- ✓ www.mallariahotspots.co.uk
- ✓ www.traveldoctor.co.uk
- ✓ www.nathnac.org
- ✓ www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

MEDICATION AND FIRST AID

- ✓ You must sort out a first aid kit (see below) which includes any medication you may need during your travel, including enough prescription medication for the trip. Please note that you are only allowed a maximum of 3 months of prescribed medications at a time.
- ✓ Be aware that your particular airline may require documented evidence that the medication you carry is yours. The right hand side (the white piece) of your latest / current prescription should suffice, but it may well be worth checking with your tour operator / airline if other written confirmation is needed. If a GPs letter is required there will be a charge for this.

First Aid Kit for Travel

It is always a good idea to go prepared. Here is a basic list of items you may think about taking on your travels.

- ✓ Painkillers e.g. paracetamol and / or ibuprofen
- ✓ Anti-diarrhoea i.e. loperamide
- ✓ Anti-sickness tablets
- ✓ Antihistamine e.g. piriton, cetirizine (will also help with prickly heat)
- ✓ Malaria creams/sprays
- ✓ Rehydration e.g. dioralyte
- ✓ Water purification tablets if appropriate
- ✓ Anti-acids e.g. rennies
- ✓ Plasters
- ✓ Antiseptic cream
- ✓ Scissors (not in hand luggage)



PROTECTION AGAINST SUN

Sunburn and heat-stroke cause serious problems in travellers but in the long term can be a serious cause of skin cancer. There is no such thing as a safe suntan, but the following advice should be taken:

PRECAUTIONARY GUIDELINES

- Increase sun exposure gradually, with a 20-minute limit initially.
- Use sun blocks which contain both UVA and UVB protection and sufficient sun protection factor (SPF) and a minimum of SPF 15. Children under 3 years should have a minimum of SPF 25 and babies under 6 months should be always kept out of the sun. Reapply often and always after swimming and washing. Read manufacturer instructions
- Always apply sunscreen first followed by an insect repellent spray on top
- Wear protective clothing – sunhats, T shirts and sunglasses etc.
- Avoid going out between 11am - 3pm, when the sun's rays are strongest
- Take special care of children and those with pale skin/red hair
- Drink extra fluids in a hot climate – be aware alcohol can make you dehydrated



FOOD AND DRINK

Contaminated food is the commonest source of many diseases abroad. You can help prevent illness by following these guidelines for advice on consuming food and beverages:

Category	SAFE	PROBABLY SAFE	UNSAFE
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbonated soft drinks• Carbonated water• Boiled water• Purified water (iodine or chlorine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh citrus juices• Bottled water• Packaged (machine - made ice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tap water• Chipped ice• Unpasteurized milk
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hot thoroughly grilled, boiled• Processed and packaged• Cooked vegetables and peeled fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dry items• Hyperosmolar items (such as jam and syrup)• Washed vegetables and fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salads• Sauces and 'salsa'• Uncooked seafood• Raw or poorly cooked meats• Unpeeled* fruits• Unpasteurized dairy products• Cold desserts
Setting	Recommended restaurants	Local homes	Street vendors

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)

- ✓ Boiled water
- ✓ Bottled water or canned drinks
- ✓ Water treated by a sterilising agent

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the 'faecal-oral' route. To help prevent this, always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating and before handling food. Using hand gel is another sensible option.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

This the **most common illness** that you will be exposed to abroad and there is **NO vaccine against it**. Diarrhoea is caused by eating and/or drinking food and water contaminated by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Risk of illness is higher in some countries than others.



High risk areas include North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, S.E. Asia, South America, Mexico, and the Middle East.

Medium risk areas include the northern Mediterranean, Canary Islands, and the Caribbean Islands.

Low risk areas include North America, Western Europe, and Australia.

You can certainly help **prevent** travellers' diarrhoea in the way you **behave** - make sure you follow the food, water and personal hygiene guidelines already given.

What is travellers' diarrhoea?

Travellers' diarrhoea is 3 or more loose stools in a 24-hour period often accompanied by stomach pain, cramps, and vomiting. It usually lasts 2-4 days and whilst it is not a life-threatening illness, it can disrupt your trip for several days. The main danger of the illness is **dehydration**, and this, if very severe, can kill if it is not treated. **Treatment** is therefore **rehydration**.

Travel well prepared

A good tip is to take oral rehydration solutions with you. These can be bought over the counter in a chemist shop, available in tablet or sachet form — for example:

DIORALYTE or ELECTROLADE or DIORALYTE RELIEF. (The latter is a formula containing rice powder which also helps to relieve the diarrhoea, particularly useful in children).

Anti-diarrhoeal tablets can be used for adults but should NEVER be USED in children under 4 years of age, and only on prescription for children aged 4 to 12 years. Commonly used tablets are loperamide and bismuth subsalicylate - ask your pharmacist for advice about them.

None of these tablets should ever be used if the person has a temperature or blood in the stool.

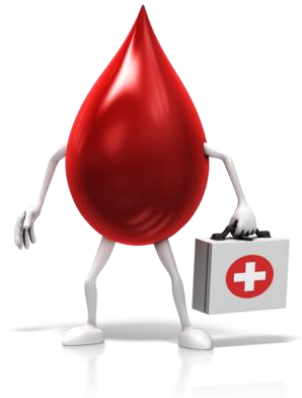
Do contact medical help if the affected person has:

- A temperature
- Blood in the diarrhoea
- Diarrhoea for more than 48 hours (or 24 hours in children)
- Becomes confused

In some circumstances, antibiotics are used as a standby treatment for travellers' diarrhoea. Such medication is not usually available on the NHS in anticipation of you being ill when away and needs to be prescribed. A woman taking the oral contraceptive pill may not have full contraceptive protection if she has had diarrhoea and vomiting. Extra precautions must be used - refer to your 'pill' information leaflet. If using condoms, take a supply of good quality ones with you which are CE approved.

To avoid the risk of diarrhoea, vomiting or diseases such as typhoid and hepatitis A, adhering to the following will help minimise the risks:

- ✓ Drink bottled water whenever possible.
- ✓ In restaurants, ensure bottle is opened in front of you.
- ✓ Boil any drinking water you are unsure about wherever possible
- ✓ Brush teeth using bottled water where possible or if unsure.
- ✓ Avoid ice in your drinks.
- ✓ Avoid shellfish, salads and fruits that you haven't prepared yourself.
- ✓ Be cautious of ice-creams / lollies / soft cheeses.
- ✓ Ensure hot / cooked food is piping hot, if not then avoid.
- ✓ Avoid roadside vendors.
- ✓ Ensure hand hygiene is maintained, never use communal towels in toilets etc.



Zika Virus

The illness – Most people infected with ZIKV will have only very mild, or no symptoms. Symptoms usually start 3-14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito and last for 2-7 days. They include: rash, itch, mild fever, headache, red eyes, muscle and joint pains. Other less common symptoms include: loss of appetite, diarrhoea, constipation, abdominal pain and dizziness.

Infection during pregnancy can lead to congenital zika syndrome, with severe consequences for the baby. Men/women **planning pregnancy** or where there is a **risk of pregnancy** should avoid the risk of ZIKV in pregnancy and sexual transmission of ZIKV by the use of contraception and condoms during travel and for:

- **2 months afterwards if female**
- **3 months afterwards if male**

If you are pregnant and considering travel to a country or area with a risk of ZIKV transmission you should discuss the risk of ZIKV with your healthcare provider so you can make a fully informed decision regarding your travel plans. You should:

- Remember that malaria and other travel related hazards may pose a risk during pregnancy
- Use condoms to prevent sexual transmission of ZIKV during travel and throughout the pregnancy.
- On return, seek early obstetric review, even if well.

MALARIA

Malaria is a disease spread by mosquitoes, there is no vaccine yet available. If you are travelling to a country where you are more vulnerable to malaria, the travel adviser will have given you a separate leaflet with more details. Remember malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. If you develop flu like symptoms, including fever, sweats, chills, feeling unwell, headaches, muscle pains, cough, diarrhoea – then seek medical help immediately for advice and say you've been abroad. This is VITAL, don't delay.

Remember the ABCD of malaria prevention advice:

Awareness of the risk

Bite prevention

Chemoprophylaxis (taking the correct tablets)

Diagnosis (knowing the symptoms and acting quickly)



Malaria is widespread in many countries and is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. You cannot vaccinate for this disease, but you can protect yourself.

Precautions-

- ✓ Avoid mosquito bites, especially after dusk. Wear long shorts or trousers.
- ✓ Use a good insect repellent that is 50% deet during the key times.
- ✓ Before retiring to bed spray bedclothes with insect repellent.
- ✓ A plug-in mosquito repellent should be used.
- ✓ Do not leave the windows open.
- ✓ Mosquito nets should be used if appropriate.
- ✓ Ensure you take an adequate supply of antihistamine.

Mosquito Bite Avoidance

Strict Bite avoidance measures are recommended for all travellers, especially pregnant women. Aedes mosquitos are particularly persistent and aggressive biters from dawn until dusk.

- 50% DEET- based insect repellents should be applied regularly (according to manufacturer's instructions). DEET is appropriate for use in pregnancy.
If DEET is unsuitable then another, proven alternative should be used. (Detailed on **Mosquito Bite Avoidance (/advice/general-travel-health-advice/mosquito-bite-avoidance)** page)
- Wearing loose, cover-up clothing is recommended. Clothing can be impregnated or sprayed with the insecticide permethrin.
- Insecticide-impregnated bed nets and air conditioning should be used in bedrooms
- Reduction of mosquito breeding sites around hotel rooms/homes is advised for longer-term stays.

ANIMALS

Rabies is present in many parts of the world. If a person develops rabies, death is 100% certain. You must follow the rules below even if you have previously been vaccinated against rabies.

THERE ARE 3 RULES REGARDING RABIES

- ✓ Do not touch any animal, even dogs and cats
- ✓ If you are licked on broken skin, scratched or bitten by an animal in a country which has rabies, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for 10 - 15 minutes, then apply an antiseptic solution if possible e.g. iodine or alcohol. Such precautions also apply if you are licked by the animal with their saliva encountering your eyes or inside your mouth
- ✓ Seek medical advice **IMMEDIATELY**, even if you have been previously immunised, **this is essential**

FLYING AND DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

(Economy class syndrome)

- ✓ Drink plenty of water as this can help minimise dehydration during your flight.
- ✓ Try and avoid alcohol.
- ✓ Most airlines now provide information about prevention of a DVT; this includes stretching, leg exercises and ensuring adequate walking during your flight.
- ✓ Walking around the cabin area during a flight is now acceptable and it minimises the risk of DVT's occurring.
- ✓ Flight socks can be purchased, however, ensure that a measurement of your calf is taken prior to purchase. This is required along with your shoe size for a correct fit.
- ✓ Flight socks need to be put on before your flight and not removed until you've landed at your destination. They can be hand washed and reused for future travel.



ON RETURN

If you feel ill for up to 6 weeks on your return, remember to tell your doctor you have been abroad, as early symptoms of some tropical diseases can mimic common UK illnesses. You may need to continue taking anti-malarial drugs for a period after you get home. Check the duration of your prescription with the practice nurse.

INSURANCE

It is advisable to take out adequate medical insurance before departing. You may want to check that the insurance covers the cost of being flown home in an air ambulance. Take copies of all insurance documents and emergency telephone numbers when you travel.

When you buy your insurance, make sure it will cover the possessions you are taking with you. If you are carrying a laptop, mobile phone or camera think through the cost of replacement and consider paying for a top-up on the insurance if a basic policy will not cover it. Most policies have a single item limit and that might not cover your most expensive items.