



Healthy travelling

Travelling to far off and exotic countries is becoming more popular and accessible. Unfortunately, exposure to fascinating new cultures also means the risk of contracting sometimes exotic diseases. We do not have many of these diseases here - for example, malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery.

Before you go away, you should think about the health aspects of your trip. Especially if you have certain illnesses, are on medication, or if you are going to a high risk health area.

When should I see my GP?

Most travellers should see their GP eight weeks before departure. Or, if you are going to live or work overseas, six months before departure. Remember it is never too late to seek advice.

What vaccinations will I need?

Your GP will advise you on your specific needs.

- You should be up to date with vaccinations against polio, tetanus, diphtheria, mumps, measles and rubella.
- Children younger than five should have the HIB vaccination.
- People older than 65 should have the flu vaccine.

You will need a course of vaccines to protect against some diseases.

What about side effects?

Side effects generally are not serious. Some people with specific allergies cannot have certain vaccines. Discuss this with your GP.

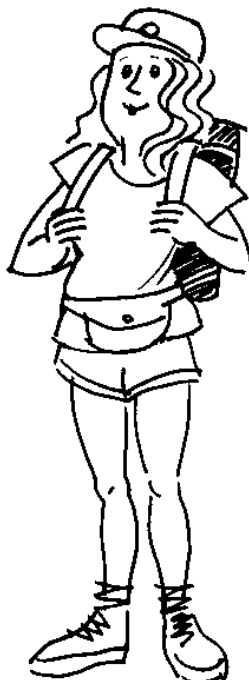
Have your vaccines some time before departure, in case you have a mild reaction.

What about special vaccines?

Your GP will advise you on your specific needs.

Protection against malaria, typhoid and hepatitis A is recommended for many developing countries. You should also have some additional protection for some parts of the world.

For example, in Nepal and some



parts of India you should have the meningitis vaccine. In parts of South America and Africa, the yellow fever vaccine and in some remote areas, a rabies vaccine.

Aid workers should have TB and Hepatitis B vaccines.

Do I need anti malaria tablets?

This depends on the countries you visit, specific regions and how long you

will be there. Unfortunately, resistance to these drugs is common. Your GP will discuss what you need.

Pregnant women and young children need special consideration.

Taking anti malarial drugs will not give you 100% protection. It is important to consult a doctor if you have any fever or illness during and after travel. Try to avoid mosquitoes! The best protection is not getting bitten at all.

What about street food?

Hepatitis A and typhoid are transmitted by contaminated food and water, so always be careful and use your common sense.

How clean is the food stall and preparation area? Is there protection from flies? Is the food cooked and piping hot?

Avoid uncooked food unless you can peel it or it is in a protective shell. Bottled and packaged drinks are usually safe. Drinking water should be bottled, boiled, or chlorinated and filtered.

What about a first aid kit?

Don't leave home without it, especially in remote areas. Pack oral rehydration salts, such as Gastrolyte or Repalyte, as up to half of all travellers in developing countries will get diarrhoea and may become dehydrated.

Some drugs such as antibiotics, anti nausea drugs, antihistamines and anti diarrhoeal medications are useful. You can only get these through your GP.

What about any existing medical problems?

Be sure to discuss special travel requirements with your GP. Make sure you have enough of your medication to last you for the trip, eg. diabetes, asthma, or blood pressure medication.

More detailed information on your health and travelling overseas is available from your GP.

