

Travel Considerations for Patients at Higher Risk of Contracting Malaria

Destination _____ Departure Date _____ Length of Stay _____

Prophylaxis to Consider:

Malaria Prophylaxis: ☐ No (reason) _____ ☐ Yes (Chloroquine Phosphate 250 mg. = 150 mg base)

Chloroquine Phosphate 250 mg., 2 tablets (500 mg.) once weekly one week prior to departure; for the duration of trip; and for four weeks on return.

OR

Malarone 1 tablet daily for two days prior to departure; one tablet daily for the duration of trip; and one tablet daily for seven days on return.

Other Immunization(s) to Consider:

Tetanus – Diphtheria: ☐ No (reason) _____ ☐ Yes - 0.5 ml. Tetanus-Diphtheria

Hepatitis A: ☐ No (reason) _____ ☐ Yes - Havrix 1440 –one dose repeated at 6 mos interval

Hepatitis B: ☐ No (reason) _____ ☐ Yes - Engerex – three doses at appropriate intervals

Hepatitis A & B: ☐ No (reason) _____ ☐ Yes – Twinrix – three doses at appropriate intervals
OR
four doses at rapid dosing intervals

Dukoral ☐ No (reason) _____ ☐ Yes (reason) _____
(2 packets taken one week apart to be completed one week prior to departure)

Risk Factors for Travellers' Diarrhea:

Patients traveling to high risk areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
People with relative lack of gut immunity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Adventurous travelers who eat food from street vendors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Travellers living in close proximity to local population.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Gastric hypocholelrydria or achlorhydria.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Gastrectomy patients.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Immunodeficiency disorders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
History of repeated severe travelers diarrhea.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Travel Checklist

1. Immunization and malaria prophylaxis reviewed. ☐ Yes
2. General travel health guidelines reviewed and handout given. ☐ Yes
3. Prescriptions written, documented, and possible side effects reviewed. ☐ Yes
4. Billings (\$50.00) done ☐ Yes



This article was produced in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada.

TRAVEL HEALTH

The Issue

As global travel has increased in recent years, so has the possibility of importing into Canada existing and new diseases. All Canadians have a responsibility to protect their own health while abroad and to contact their doctor, reporting where they have been, should they become ill on their return to Canada.

Background

Canadians make more than 100 million trips abroad each year, for business and pleasure. While the vast majority of them come home safe and healthy, a number do become ill. Often the illnesses and injuries are caused by:

- Not being protected against diseases for which there are vaccines
- Consuming contaminated water or food
- Not taking preventative medications, such as malaria pills
- Taking risks, such as being tattooed, having unsafe sex or drinking excessively.

Recent outbreaks of new diseases, such as SARS in Canada in 2003, show that deadly diseases against which people have little or no immunity can spread quickly.

It is up to individuals and governments to be on guard against diseases that can affect the health of everyone, both here and abroad. It is recommended that Canadians travelling internationally contact their doctor or a travel clinic six to

eight weeks before travelling, regardless of where they are going, to have their risk assessed. Based on your current health, your travel itinerary and your previous immunization history, your doctor can determine what immunizations and/or preventive medication you may need, as well as advise you on how you can avoid disease risks.

A variety of conditions in other countries can be significantly different from those in Canada. Anyone travelling abroad should be aware that such conditions might affect your health, your access to medical help, and your personal safety.

The Health Risks of Travel

By far the most common complaint while travelling is diarrhea, or 'turista'. This is usually caused by the differences in water purity. Canada's municipal water supplies are treated to remove most waterborne organisms, but some less developed countries may not do this. Travellers may have diarrhea while travelling abroad if they drink the local water or food prepared with local water in these countries.

You can also be at risk for a number of childhood illnesses when you travel, especially if you have not been immunized against them or kept your immunizations up to date. Routine immunizations include:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio

Canada





It's Your Health

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella

In countries where sanitary conditions are poor, immunizations against typhoid and hepatitis A may be recommended.

Depending on your travel activities and the local disease situation, you may need to be immunized against these diseases.

- Meningitis
- Japanese encephalitis
- European tick-borne encephalitis
- Hepatitis B
- Rabies

Depending on where you are travelling, you may also be at risk of these diseases, among others.

- Malaria, caused by infected mosquito bites in many tropical countries
- Yellow fever, caused by infected mosquito bites in Central Africa and South America
- Dengue fever, caused by infected mosquito bites in many tropical countries
- Schistosomiasis, caused by a parasite in fresh water in the Caribbean, South America, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

As well, some sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, are more common in some countries than they are in Canada.

You should also be safety conscious when travelling. Economic conditions in developing countries can cause increased crime rates and tourists are often targeted.

Minimizing Your Risk

Here are some tips to help you enjoy safe travel.

- Make sure all your regular vaccinations are up to date.
- Before you travel, contact a travel clinic or your doctor six to eight weeks before you go, to allow time for any vaccinations you may need. This is especially true if you are going to tropical areas or developing countries.
- Arrange for private health insurance while you are away, as your provincial/territorial health insurance may not cover you. Your travel agent can advise you on this.
- If you are going to an area where malaria is present, it is important that you take antimalarial medication as prescribed by your doctor.
- Since anti-malarial medication does not guarantee absolute protection against the disease, preventing mosquito bites is very important. Use mosquito repellents when outside, especially between dusk and dawn. Sleep in well-screened or air conditioned accommodation or use a bed net. Wear trousers and long sleeves at dusk.
- If you become ill in the first two months to a year after you return, see your doctor immediately and tell her/him that you have visited an area where malaria occurs.
- To prevent 'turista', the key principles to remember are: boil it, cook it, peel it or leave it! Always drink purified water or commercially bottled beverages, and pasteurized milk. Avoid ice, salads, re-heated foods, uncooked shellfish, fruit that is not peeled and food from street vendors.
- Wash your hands often with soap or a sanitizing agent when travelling, especially before eating or drinking.
- Should you experience diarrhea, be sure to drink plenty of liquids to prevent becoming dehydrated, especially in warm climates.
- In warmer climates, always use a sunblock with a minimum SPF of 15.
- To help prevent sexually transmitted diseases, always use a condom if you have sex with someone you meet while travelling.
- Never share needles to inject intravenous drugs with anyone.
- Swim in fresh water only if you know it is free of biharzia, the parasites that cause schistosomiasis.
- Do not walk alone in remote areas, back streets or beaches, where you may be at risk of a personal attack or bag snatching. Valuables should be left at home or deposited in hotel safes. Travellers cheques, cash, passports and tickets should not be carried in bags that can be snatched. It is recommended that you use a body belt.
- Do not ride in over-crowded vehicles or on motorcycles, especially at night outside of urban areas.



It's Your Health

- If you need medication for an existing medical condition, take enough with you to last during your travel. Make sure the containers are clearly marked and carry a copy of the doctor's prescription with you. Essential medication should be carried in two different pieces of luggage, in case one should get lost or stolen.
- If your medication requires sterile syringes or needles, carry a doctor's explanation or medical certificate with you. In many countries where drug trafficking is a problem, a traveller found with syringes and without adequate explanation, could be in serious trouble with the police.

The Public Health Agency of Canada's Role

The Public Health Agency of Canada's Travel Medicine Program is a front-line service provider for the travelling Canadian public and health care providers. To encourage safe and healthy travel, the Public Health Agency of Canada provides travellers and health care professionals with information on current international disease outbreaks of concern, as well as recommendations to prevent specific diseases and treatment guidelines.

Need More Info?

For more information on travel health :

Visit the Travel Medicine Program website at:
www.travelhealth.gc.ca
or Contact the Travel Medicine Program at (613)- 957-8739

Canadian Health Portal, Travel Web site at:
http://chp-pcs.gc.ca/CHP/index_e.jsp/pageid/4005/odp/Top/Health/Travel

World Health Organization's International travel and health Web site at:
<http://www.who.int/ith/en/>

Foreign Affairs Canada, Travel Assistance Web site at:
<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/travel/menu-en.asp>

For additional articles on this subject and other issues go to the It's Your Health Web site at:
www.healthcanada.ca/iyh
You can also call toll free at 1-866-225-0709
or TTY at 1-800-267-1245*

✈ Travelling outside the country?

If you are planning to travel outside the country, tell your doctor as far in advance as you can. You may not want to worry about travel risks — but what you don't know may hurt you or make you sick!

To stay safe and healthy, you may need to know and do (or not do) certain things. It all depends on where you go, how you get there, what you do there, and how healthy you are when you leave.

This booklet tells you a little about some of the:

- risks you should know about and precautions you can take
- places to find more information

Some of the things that you may need to get before you leave are:

- ☐ vaccinations ("shots") against infections like hepatitis, polio, rabies, tetanus, typhoid
- ☐ refills for your regular prescriptions
- ☐ medications to treat diarrhea and prevent malaria
- ☐ proof of vaccination against certain infections
- ☐ medical insurance and special supplies (first aid kit, DEET insect repellent, mosquito netting treated with permethrin, sunscreen, water purification kit, etc.)

Unless you take suitable precautions, you could get:

- ☐ diarrhea, hepatitis A, or polio from contaminated food and drinks
- ☐ dengue fever, malaria or yellow fever from insect bites, or rabies from animal bites
- ☐ dehydration, sunburn, and sunstroke from too much sun, heat, and humidity
- ☐ hepatitis B or HIV (from unprotected sex), poorly screened blood (if you need a transfusion), poorly cleaned equipment (acupuncture, piercing, medical, surgical or tattooing)
- ☐ infections, parasites, or tetanus ("lock-jaw") by walking barefoot
- ☐ assaulted or robbed while exploring
- ☐ injured or killed in sporting or traffic accidents

Take action to stay healthy and safe: plan ahead, be prepared, and do what your doctor recommends.

Food and drink safety

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The best advice is to "boil it, cook it, peel it — or forget it."

Water in many tropical and developing countries can transmit diseases such as cholera, dysentery, giardiasis, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, and polio. Be sure to:

- ✓ drink hot tea or coffee made with boiled water
- ✓ avoid ice cubes — freezing will not kill the organisms (and neither will alcohol!)
- ✓ drink bottled water or carbonated drinks in sealed containers from reputable sources only

Note: If you cannot get safe bottled water, boil your water or purify it with special commercial filters and/or chemical treatment (chlorine or iodine).

Raw fruits, salads, and vegetables can transmit some of the same diseases as contaminated water. (Strawberries and leafy vegetables like lettuce and cabbage are particularly hard to clean.) So, avoid salad bars and cold buffets. Eat only cooked vegetables. Eat only cooked fruit or fruit that you peel yourself.

Unpasteurized **dairy products** can transmit brucellosis and tuberculosis. Use only pasteurized products. Yogurt is usually safe, but ice cream and custards are NOT safe.

Bacteria can grow quickly on cold **meat and seafood**, especially in high heat and humidity.

- ✓ eat only well-cooked meat that is served hot
- ✓ eat only well-cooked fish and seafood (especially shellfish, which filter large volumes of water and concentrate many infectious organisms)

Personal safety

Avoid travelling alone. Don't flash your money, jewelry, or possessions. Don't drive or walk at night, in bad weather, or "off the beaten path."

Don't take any unnecessary risks, especially if you don't speak the local language. Be very careful if you are driving a rented auto or moped, or walking or biking along roadways. Be at least as cautious as you would be in a large European or North American city.



Insect bites

Depending on where you go, mosquito and sandfly bites can infect you with malaria or other serious infections. Your first line of defence is to avoid insect bites.

The mosquitoes that transmit malaria are active from dusk until dawn. To avoid them:

- ✓ when you go outside after dusk, wear light-coloured clothing with long sleeves and legs and apply DEET insect repellent to exposed skin
- ✓ sleep in rooms that are well-screened or air-conditioned
- ✓ use a "knock-down" (insecticidal) bug spray to kill any mosquitoes that entered the room during the day
- ✓ surround your bed with mosquito netting that has been treated with permethrin

The mosquitoes and flies that transmit dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, leishmaniasis, West Nile virus, and yellow fever bite during the day. Use suitable clothing and insect repellent to avoid their bites too.

Blood and body fluids

Contact with the blood or body fluid of an infected person can transmit serious infections such as HIV or hepatitis B. In many developing countries, a larger portion of the population is infected and the risk of transmission is much higher than in North America.

You can also be exposed through blood transfusions, unsterilized instruments (needles, razors, scalpels, syringes, etc), and sexual contact.

To reduce the risk of these types of infection while travelling, avoid:

- ✗ unprotected sexual activity
- ✗ acupuncture, body piercings, and tattoos
- ✗ sharing syringes and razors

Also, be extra careful to avoid injury, so that you won't need medical or surgical treatment, or blood transfusions.

Travel Immunization Clinic (Dr. Colby) 663-3395

**Address: Middlesex London Health Unit
50 King Street**

London Travel Clinic (Dr. Hammerberg) 432-5508
Address: 207-240 Wilmshurst Road N.

Looking for more information?

This booklet does not include everything you need to know about travel health risks.

Fortunately, a lot of good travel information is available on the Internet, if you know where to look.

- Start your search at one of these reliable sites. Each has:
- a different layout and unique features (but much of the same information)
 - separate information for travellers and health care providers

Health Canada (www.TravelHealth.gc.ca)

This site includes:

- ▶ information in English and French
- ▶ country-by-country listings of risks
- ▶ information about health and personal safety risks
- ▶ currency, legal, political and visa information
- ▶ up-to-date travel advisories
- ▶ a list of Travel Medicine clinics in Canada

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.CDC.gov/travel)

This site includes information:

- ▶ in English and Spanish
- ▶ on a regional basis
- ▶ about infectious disease risks and other health risks
- ▶ on recent travel advisories

World Health Organization (www.WHO.int/ith)

This site includes information:

- ▶ in English, French, and Spanish
- ▶ on a regional basis
- ▶ about infectious disease risks and other health risks
- ▶ travel advisories

Talk to your doctor about your plans, and bring along copies of any information you have found.

Feel free to copy this sheet

