

Heywood Family Practice

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

As you will be aware, GP surgeries are working under increasing pressure, and are having to prioritise the services they can provide. We have offered a full travel service free of charge until recently, but as the surgery receives no funding for this and it is very time consuming, we are sadly no longer able to continue this. The NHS has a very comprehensive web-site, giving the information you need to identify any vaccines advised for trips abroad, and ensure that you stay as healthy as possible. This can be found at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

The following vaccinations are commonly required for many holiday destinations, and are free of charge on the NHS:

Diphtheria, tetanus and polio (combined)

Hepatitis A

Typhoid

These can be administered by a nurse at this surgery, if needed.

Cholera medication is also available on the NHS, but is not commonly required.

Other vaccinations may be necessary for more exotic or unusual destinations, complex travel itineraries, or long stay vacations. These need to be given at a high street travel clinic (e.g. Nomad, Masta or Sta Travel). There will be a charge for these. If you would rather have all of your vaccinations done at these clinics, they can also give the vaccines in bold (above), but they will charge for these.

We strongly advise you to check your requirements **at least three months before travel**, as sometimes a course of up to three vaccinations needs to be given over the course of several weeks.

It is your responsibility to ascertain which vaccinations (and, if relevant, anti-malaria tablets) you need, and also to inform yourself fully of recommended travel safe precautions.

To do this, you should visit the NHS Fit For Travel website at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk and read the information relevant to the country you are visiting.

Follow these simple steps:

1. Select the country you are visiting from the “**destinations**” box on the left.
2. Read the “**Advice for all travellers**” information, following links in blue. This will give you detailed information about health risks abroad such as insect bites, sun-exposure, contaminated food and drink. Also advice is given about visas and health insurance.

3. Note the “**Courses or boosters usually advised**”. If you have a record of your immunisations/vaccinations at home, see if you are up-to-date with the recommended vaccines.

Hepatitis A – If you have had two vaccinations, you are covered for 25 years (from the 2nd dose)

Diphtheria, tetanus and polio - booster required every 10 years (for travel purposes only)

Typhoid – booster required every 3 years (for travel purposes only).

Please be aware that it is not good for the immune system to unnecessarily have vaccinations more frequently than this. If you are unsure of when you had any previous vaccinations, ask the surgery for a printout of your vaccination history. You should keep a record of this.

The “vaccinations sometimes advised” section usually relates to back-packers, people travelling for more than 4 weeks, or special situations, e.g. working in health care projects, or with animals. If you are planning such a trip you need to make arrangements to have these at a high street travel clinic (e.g., Nomad, Masta, The Medical or Sta Travel). There will be a charge for these.

4. If you think that you need any of the vaccinations provided by the NHS, (in bold above), make an appointment with the nurse, **bringing with you a printout of the relevant Fit For Travel information.**
5. Read the information about **malaria**, (if this is an issue where you are going), and follow the “**precautions**” link. If anti-malaria tablets are advised for your destination, there will be a link to a “**malaria map**” which will show the details for the risk for your destination.

The site will also indicate which anti-malaria tablets are effective in that region. If Proguanil and/or Chloroquine are advised, these can be bought over the counter at a pharmacy.

If Atovaquone/Proguanil (Malarone) or Doxycycline or Mefloquine (Lariam) are recommended, read through the information carefully, and go to a high street travel clinic to buy your supply.

These need to be started before entering a malaria area, continued during the trip, and for a period of time after leaving, so you need to plan ahead. We also advise you to take your itinerary and dates with you to work out how many you need to buy.

6. Read the entire section “**other health risks**” which contains further up-to-date information about your travel destination, including current outbreaks, risks, etc.

TRAVEL SAFELY AND ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAY

Useful contacts:

Nomad: www.nomadtravel.co.uk 01341 555061

Masta : www.masta-travel-health.com 0330 1004131