

University Health Service



The University of
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM • CHINA • MALAYSIA



*Health
Service*

Travel Health Advice

Please read the following information to help you stay healthy on your trip:

Water

Several diseases can be caught from drinking contaminated water. Unless you know the water supply is safe, use only, boiled water, bottled water, canned drinks or water treated by a sterilising agent. This includes ice cubes and water for cleaning your teeth.

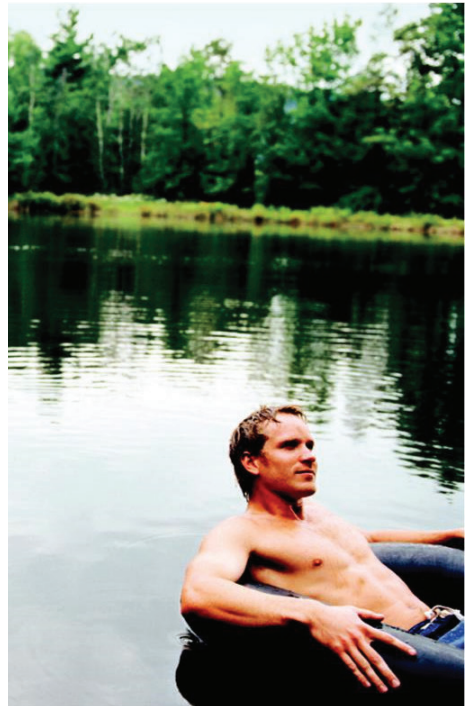
Swimming

It is safer to swim in well chlorinated water. If you're travelling to Sub Saharan Africa, South America and the Philippines, avoid swimming in fresh water lakes and streams. You can catch a parasitic disease called schistosomiasis - also known as bilharzia. It is also wise not to go barefoot, even on the beach as other diseases can be caught from sand and soil.

Food and drink

Contaminated food and water can transmit a number of different infectious diseases such as, hepatitis A, typhoid, cholera and traveller's diarrhoea. You can help to prevent these diseases by following these guidelines:

- Only eat well-cooked food.
- Avoid reheated food and food that has been left uncovered in warm environments, exposed to flies.
- Avoid raw or undercooked meat, fish or shellfish.
- Eat cooked vegetables, avoid salads.
- Only eat fruit you can peel.
- Avoid unpasteurised dairy products such as milk, ice cream, yogurts and cheese.
- Avoid buying food from street vendors unless thoroughly cooked in front of you and served hot on clean crockery.



Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol or drug use may compromise your safety, increase the risk of accident and injury and can invalidate travel insurance claims. Drinking alcohol is forbidden in some countries and the penalties for supplying or possessing illicit drugs can be very severe in some countries.

Personal Hygiene

Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the faecal oral route. To help prevent these diseases, travellers should wash their hands after visiting the toilet, changing nappies and before preparing or eating food. Alcohol gel is a helpful alternative.

Travellers' Diarrhoea

Travellers' diarrhoea (TD) is the most common health problem of overseas travellers. It is defined as three or more unformed stools in a 24 hour period, often accompanied by at least one of the following: fever, nausea, vomiting, cramps, or bloody stools. It is caused by eating and/or drinking food and water contaminated by bacteria, viruses or parasites. You can help prevent travellers' diarrhoea by making sure you follow the food, water and personal hygiene guidelines already given.

It usually lasts 2-4 days and while it is not a life-threatening illness, it can disrupt your trip. The main danger is dehydration. Treatment is rehydration so drink plenty of clear fluids.. In severe cases and in young children and the elderly, commercially prepared rehydration sachets are useful and can be bought from a pharmacy. Anti-diarrhoeal tablets can be used for adults .

Contact medical help if the affected person has a temperature, bloody diarrhoea, has it for more than 48 hours (24 hours for children) or becomes confused.

Hepatitis B and HIV infection

Hepatitis B and HIV are blood borne viruses transmitted by contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person.

The risk of contracting hepatitis B infection for most travellers is low.

The risk can be reduced by:

- Avoiding unprotected sex with new partners abroad. Always use kite marked condoms.
- Avoiding sharing drug injection equipment
- Avoiding public shaving, sharing shaving equipment,
- Avoiding acupuncture, skin piercing, manicures and tattoos (unless sterile equipment is used).

If travelling to a developing country a sterile medical kit may be advisable.

Accidents and Insurance Cover

Accidents are one of the leading causes of death in travellers. Avoid alcohol and food before swimming. Never dive into the water where the depth is uncertain. Only swim in safe water, check currents, sharks, jellyfish, etc. Avoid hiring motorcycles and mopeds. If hiring a car rent a large one if possible, & ensure in good condition. Use reliable taxi firms. Know where emergency facilities are.

Take out adequate insurance cover for your trip. This should ideally include medical repatriation. This service if needed is extremely expensive. If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, make sure you inform the insurance company of these details and check the small print of the policy thoroughly.

Air travel

To reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis, it is sensible for anyone on a long haul flight to exercise your legs, feet and toes whilst sitting and take short walks whenever feasible. These precautions apply particularly to women who take the Pill or HRT, who are slightly more at risk of travel-related deep vein thrombosis. Flight socks may be worn. Upper body and breathing exercises can further improve circulation.

Sun and heat

Sunburn and heatstroke can cause serious problems in travellers. The sun can be enjoyed safely by using shade, protective clothing, hats, sunglasses and sunscreen to prevent burning. Use sun blocks of appropriate adequate SPF strength, reapply often and always after swimming and washing. Avoid going out between 11am and 3pm when the sun's rays are at the strongest. Take special care of children and those with pale skin. Drink extra non-alcoholic fluids in a hot climate. Be aware that alcohol can make you dehydrated.

Insect bites

Mosquitoes, certain types of flies, and bugs can cause many different diseases.

Mosquitoes are attracted by several factors, including the presence of carbon dioxide, heat, odours and movement. There are many mosquito species; some species bite during daylight hours and some are more active from dusk to dawn.

Diseases transmitted by mosquitoes include:

Malaria	Chikungunya	Dengue	Japanese Encephalitis
West Nile Fever	Yellow Fever	Zika Virus	

Avoid being bitten by:



- Covering skin up as much as possible. Wear light-coloured clothes, long sleeves, trousers or long skirts.
- Use insect repellent on exposed skin. Remember to apply after sun cream. Choose insect repellents containing 35-50% DEET. Clothes can be sprayed with repellents too.
- Switch on air conditioning. If the room is not air conditioned, but screened, close shutters early evening and spray room with a knockdown insecticide.
- If camping or sleeping in unprotected accommodation in malaria regions, always sleep under mosquito nets impregnated with Permethrin.
- Avoid camping near stagnant water, as this is a common breeding area for mosquitoes.
- Electric insecticide vaporisers are effective if there are no power failures. Electric buzzers, garlic and vitamin B are ineffective

Malaria

If you are travelling to an area with malaria, the nurse will give you a separate leaflet with more details about bite avoidance and anti-malarial medication.

If you develop a fever and flu like symptoms up to 12 months after trip -seek medical advice.

Zika Virus

Zika virus (ZIKV) infection is spread by day-biting mosquitoes.

A small number of cases of sexual transmission of Zika have also been reported and there is increasing evidence of transmission from mother to foetus via the placenta.

ZIKV infection is usually a mild and short-lived illness; severe disease is uncommon.

Symptoms include: fever, headache, red, sore eyes and conjunctivitis, joint and muscle pain, rash, itching and swollen joints.

There is no specific treatment; rest, fluids and pain relief are recommended to help relieve symptoms. Serious complications and deaths from ZIKV are not common.

However, there is now scientific consensus that ZIKV is a cause of microcephaly, other congenital anomalies, and Guillain-Barré syndrome.

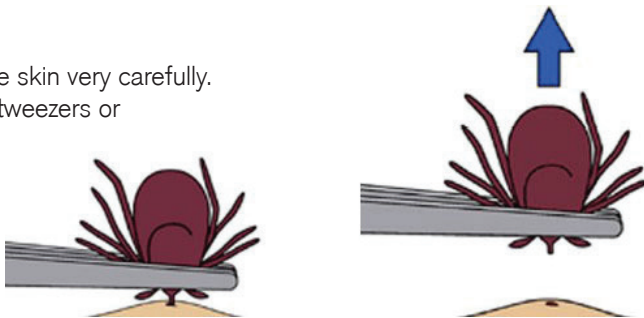
Tick bites

Ticks typically live in long grassy areas. They usually feed on small mammals. On humans, ticks crawl on skin or clothing until they find a suitable place to attach and feed, often at a skin fold in the groin, under the arm, at the scalp line, or at the edge of underclothes. Diseases, such as Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever, Lyme disease and tick-borne encephalitis are transmitted by ticks. In tick-infested areas, trousers should be tucked into socks to prevent ticks from crawling up the legs.

Ticks need to be removed from the skin very carefully.

This can be done with fine tipped tweezers or specially designed tick removers.

Grasp the tick near to the skin and steadily pull out the tick being careful not to crush the tick's body or squeeze the stomach contents into the site of the bite.



Animal bites and Rabies

Rabies is present in many parts of the world. It is a viral disease transmitted to humans usually by a bite or scratch from an infected animal. The virus attacks the central nervous system causing, progressive damage to the brain and spinal cord. Once symptoms are present, rabies is almost always fatal.

Pre-exposure vaccines are recommended for those whose activities put them at increased risk.

- Those visiting areas where access to medical care is limited.
- Those planning higher risk activities such as cycling and running.
- Long-stay travellers (more than one month).

A course of pre exposure vaccines simplifies treatment post exposure. In the event of a possible rabies exposure, two further rabies vaccines are administered. For individuals who have not had pre exposure rabies vaccine, five doses of rabies vaccine are usually recommended over one month plus rabies immunoglobulin may be recommended. Immunoglobulin is in short supply worldwide, and may not be available in many countries.

Whether you chose to have pre exposure vaccines or not, everyone should apply the following rules:

- **AVOID** contact with wild or domestic animals
- **URGENT** action is required if bitten, licked or scratched.
- **WASH** the wound with detergent or soap and running water for at least 5 minutes.
- **APPLY** a disinfectant to the wound such as iodine or 40-70% alcohol if available.
- **IMMEDIATELY** seek medical advice, even if the animal looks well.

Treatment should be commenced as soon as possible after exposure.

Travellers suggested check lists...

Essentials			
Passport		Visas	
Bank cards		Local currency	
Travel tickets		Insurance	
Immunisation record		First aid Kit	
Regular medication		Mobile phone	
Adapter plugs		Chargers electronics	
Money belt		Padlock	
Glasses/contact lens		Sunglasses	
Pens		Guidebook	

Toiletries			
Condoms		Contraception	
Sun cream		Insect repellent	
Shaving equipment		Tampons/pads	
Deodorant		Shower gel	
Wet wipes		Face wash	
Nail clippers		Brush/comb	
Shampoo/conditioner		Moisturiser	
Lip Balm		Hair bobbles	

What to include in a First aid kit...

Equipment		Medication	
Insurance details		Regular Medication	
Basic dressings		Paracetamol/Ibuprofen	
Sterile wipes		Rehydration sachets	
Hand gel		Anti-diarrhoea medication	
Bandages		Anti-histamines	
Tape		Motion sickness medication	
Scissors/tweezers		Indigestion relief	
Medic alert ID		Anti-malarial medication	
Sterile needles		Insect bite cream	

Suggested tips

Make a list of the following and get photocopies/take photos with mobile phone of each:

- airline tickets
- passport number and date issued
- driving license
- insurance details
- emergency contact numbers
- embassy addresses
- credit/bank card numbers/emergency numbers
- any other important documents

Keep a copy with you and leave a copy for a trusted relative/friend at home. You can also attach scanned copies to an email sent to yourself which you can then access via an internet cafe.

Further detailed information is available at:

www.unhs.co.uk

www.travelhealthpro.org.uk

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

www.lonelyplanet.com/

A worldwide travel clinic directory can be found at:

www.istm.org

Consular Assistance team:

+44 (0)2070081500

Useful apps:

Safer Travel

My Travel Health

Twitter: @RoughGuides

* We regret that for medico-legal reasons, we do not give health advice over the phone.

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