HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

James Madison University Health Center
• Highlight potential health risks for international travelers
• Review recommended vaccinations
• Provide information to minimize health risks
• Discuss travel-related disease prevention
• Provide recommendations for the traveler’s health kit
IMPORTANCE

- International travel can result in exposures to diseases that are rare or non-existent in the US
- Some illnesses can be debilitating and even fatal
- Knowledge of risks allows preventive action
- Avoiding injury and illness is best.
RESOURCES

- [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) is a comprehensive resource and provides country-specific concerns

- University Health Center: International Travel Clinic
  - Vaccinations
  - Prescription medications to prevent disease
TRAVELER’S RESPONSIBILITY

- Know travel itinerary (include international airport layovers)
  - Visit the CDC web site (www.cdc.gov/travel) for country specific recommendations

- Know your personal vaccination history

- Make a travel clinic appointment at least two to four weeks in advance of expected travel
  - Preventative medications frequently start one week before travel
  - Vaccinations require time to become effective and may require multiple doses

- Put together a travel health kit
VACCINATIONS

• Recommendations depend upon
  • Vaccination history
  • Travel Itinerary
  • CDC recommendations

• Determined during travel health visit at the University Health Center
TRAVEL HEALTH RISKS

• Trauma
  • Leading cause of preventable death in travelers
  • 10 times more likely to die from trauma than infectious disease
    • Motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) are the most common cause of death in U.S. travelers abroad
  • Trauma care in some countries is limited
PERSONAL INJURY PREVENTION

- Always travel with others—never travel alone
- Be cautious when selecting means of transportation
- Inquire about the safety of any area before entering
- Limit or abstain from alcohol consumption as it is associated with poor decision-making
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

- “Fresh water” sources can be contaminated by animals and human waste
- Feces are frequently discharged onto the ground, into streams, or open sewers
- The presence of animal waste is common
- Presume the bottoms of your shoes are contaminated
- Frequent use of hand sanitizer is recommended
WATER PRECAUTIONS

- Presume all tap water is not safe to drink
  - Tap water is safe for showers and to wash hands
  - Tap water is not safe for drinking or brushing teeth
  - Keep your mouth shut in the shower to avoid ingesting contaminated water
- Avoid ice— it is typically not made from purified water
- Water-based drinks should be made from boiled water (tea, coffee)
- Commercial, sealed water bottles or bags are safe to drink; the outside of the container is potentially contaminated
- Carbonated beverages from sealed containers are typically safe
FOOD PRECAUTIONS

• Any raw food should be avoided (salad included)
• Avoid food from street vendors
• Fresh fruits are safe *if* you peel them yourself
• Dry foods (cakes, cookies, bread) are usually safe
TRAVELER’S DIARRHEA

- Definition: three or more unformed stools within 24-hours with at least one of the following:
  - Fever
  - Nausea with or without vomiting
  - Abdominal cramps
  - Bloody stools

- Natural History
  - Most cases occur within the first two weeks of travel
  - Most cases resolve within four days without treatment
TRAVELER’S DIARRHEA

- Prevention
  - Pepto-Bismol (Bismuth subsalicylate): two ounces or two chewable tablets four times daily
  - Antibiotics—not recommended as a prevention

- Treatment
  - Antibiotics
    - Ciprofloxacin (500 mg twice daily for one–three days)
    - Zithromax (500 mg daily for one–three days) (Southeast Asia travel or Ciprofloxacin allergy)
PROTECTION AGAINST ARTHROPOD BORNE DISEASES

- Diseases include Dengue Fever, Malaria, Chikungunya, and Zika
- Transmitted by mosquitos, ticks, flies, and lice
- *Prevention* is the primary defense
PREVENTING INSECT BITES

- Clothing
  - Cover as much skin as is reasonable
  - Avoid brightly colored clothing which attracts insects
- Mosquito nets should be tucked under the mattress
- Check for ticks daily if applicable to your area of travel
- Pre-treat clothes, bedding, and nets with Permethrin
INSECT REPELLENT

- DEET-containing products, Picardin, and Lemon Eucalyptus Oil have effective arthropod repellent activity

- Regarding DEET containing products:
  - The higher the percent DEET, the longer it will last. This is maximized at 50% DEET
  - Sunscreen efficacy is diminished by 30% when applied with DEET

- Repellants should be used all day and night
MALARIA PREVENTION

- Malaria prevention medicine *does not* give 100% prevention
- Minimizing mosquito bites is the primary defense
- Medicine recommendations depend upon travel itinerary
- You may need to start the medication one week prior to your departure
- Medicine regimen, cost, and side-effects vary
  - Options can be discussed during your travel clinic visit at the University Health Center
Typhoid fever is an acute, life-threatening illness with fever.

- The risk is highest for travelers to southeast Asia.
- Acquired through consumption of contaminated water or food.
- The risk increases with the duration of stay.
CDC frequently recommends typhoid vaccine for travelers

Typhoid immunization is not 100% effective

Protection is good for about 70% of recipients

Immunity lasts for five years

Full dosing is four doses over seven days

Must be completed one week prior to travel
ZIKA- AN EMERGING THREAT

- Carried by the same type of mosquito that carries Dengue and Chikungunya.
- Can be transmitted sexually
- Prevention is the only defense.
- The majority (about 80%) of people exposed will not show signs of the illness.
- Illness includes fever, rash, sore/painful joints or muscles, and bloodshot eyes.
- The primary concern is a Zika infection in pregnancy
  - Those who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant should avoid travel to Zika endemic areas.
  - Sexual partners of those who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant should be familiar with CDC recommendations regarding safer sexual activity. (http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/protect-yourself.html#one)
ANIMAL RISKS

- Animal rabies vaccination often does not occur in many countries around the world.
- Do not assume that domestic animals are free of rabies; many are not.
TRAVELER’S HEALTH KIT

- Travelling with medication
  - Original containers with original labels
  - Carry a letter from your medical provider on letterhead if you are travelling with controlled substances or syringes

- Pre-existing medical conditions
  - Carry enough medication for the trip plus extra in case your return is delayed
  - Carry these in your carry-on bag if possible
  - Wear a medic alert bracelet for significant pre-existing conditions or allergies (especially penicillin allergy since it is a commonly used/prescribed drug)
  - Take an Epi-pen™ if you have one prescribed
  - Bring your regular over-the-counter medications
TRAVELER’S HEALTH KIT

- Destination medications
  - Anti-malarial

- Analgesics
  - Acetaminophen
  - Ibuprofen or Naproxen

- Gastrointestinal
  - Pepto-Bismol, Imodium
  - Antibiotic to treat traveler’s diarrhea
  - Laxative

- Motion sickness (over-the-counter Bonine or Dramamine, or prescription scopolamine patch)

- Sleep medication such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine) or prescription medication
PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT

- Hand sanitizer or antibacterial hand wipes
- Disposable gloves (more than two pairs)
- Band-Aids (multiple sizes), gauze, adhesive tape
- Elastic bandage
- Antibiotic ointment
- Hydrocortisone cream, 1%
- Anti-itch gel or cream for insect bites and stings
- Aloe gel for sunburns
- Moleskin or mole foam for blisters
• Passport copy: Keep one somewhere other than with your luggage. Scan it and email it to yourself so it can be accessed at any time if your passport is lost or stolen.

• Contact information for family member or close friend remaining in the U.S.

• Make sure someone at home knows where you are staying and your itinerary.

• Have a copy of your medical insurance card and emergency contacts. Be aware, your medical insurance may not cover you or be accepted outside of the US. Check with your insurance carrier.
  • Obtain travel insurance and medical evacuation insurance information: Be familiar with the specifics of coverage.

• If you need medical care, ask around to find the best option.

• Know where the U.S. embassy or consulate in the destination country or countries is located.
POST-TRAVEL MEDICAL ILLNESS

• Most travel related illnesses resolve spontaneously
• Travel related illness prompts a medical visit only 1–5% of the time
• Medical complaints:
  • Gastrointestinal
  • Rash
  • Upper respiratory
  • Fever
  • Fever illnesses are the least common but most concerning
  • Fevers occurring up to six months after travel should prompt discussion of the travel history
THE END.

Safe Travels!