

TRAVEL VACCINE TIPS

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Internet photos



Mt A Health Student Centre Photo

Vacation bound? Here are a few tips that should keep you happy and healthy, whether you are getting some R&R on a Mexican beach, or volunteering on a remote missionary adventure. Staying healthy during your travel requires that you use your common sense. You should follow reasonable precautions with respect to food and water and be aware of the health risks in the countries you are visiting.

According to the World Health Organization, vaccines for travelers include: (1) those that are used routinely, (2) others that may be advised before travel; (3) those that, in some situations, are mandatory.

Most of the vaccines that are routinely administered in childhood require periodic booster doses throughout life, to maintain an effective level of immunity. Adults in their country of residence often neglect to keep up the schedule of booster vaccinations, particularly if the risk of infection is low. It is important to realize that diseases such as diphtheria and poliomyelitis, which no longer occur in most industrialized countries, may be present in those visited by travelers. Pretravel precautions should include booster doses of routine vaccines if the regular schedule has not been followed, or a full course of primary immunization for people who have never been vaccinated.

Other vaccines will be advised on the basis of a travel risk assessment for the individual traveler (please refer to website, www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm). In deciding which vaccines would be appropriate, the following factors are to be considered for each vaccine:

- Risk of exposure to the disease
- Age, health status, vaccination history
- Special risk factors
- Reactions to previous vaccine doses, allergies
- Risk of infecting others
- Cost

(International Travel and Health, World Health Organization, 2004)

In summary, cover all your bases and plan ahead. First, check your personal immunization record history and see what immunizations you already had, so you can compare to see if you have the recommended immunizations for your travel destination. You may then book an appointment with a Health Care Professional. **Some immunization series take many weeks to complete, so book your appointment at least 2 months before your departure.**

Your options at Mount Allison for obtaining a travel vaccine are:

#1- You can call the VON Travel Immunization Clinic in Moncton for a consultation (506-857-9115). The consultation fee is \$50.00 (for up to two people) plus the cost of the vaccine, which varies. If your family doctor is not familiar with travel medicine, travel health experts will inform you what immunizations you require.

-or-

#2- You can go online to the Mt A web site and go to the Student Health Centre site, (www.mta.ca/health), hit on the link Health Info - and you will find a reliable immunization site listed under travel vaccines.

- A) Then compare your past immunization record with the recommendations.
- B) You can book an appointment at the Student Health Centre (telephone number 364-2163) to see the Nurse/Educator for a nursing assessment and for validation of need and referral to a Physician (the Physician comes to the Centre once a week) to obtain the prescription of the vaccine required.
- C) Once your prescription is filled (client has to take the prescription to the drug store of choice to have it filled), you can receive the initial injection by the Physician at the Centre. Second and third injections can be administered by the Nurse/Educator at the Centre because the Physician who works at the Health Centre will leave a Physician's order for the Nurse/Educator on your chart.
- D) NOTE: If you are getting the prescription ordered by a Physician who doesn't work at the Centre, then a Physician's order from the ordering Physician should be faxed to the Health Centre to put on your health file. This process will ensure that there will be no delay for the Nurse/Educator to administer the second and third doses of the vaccine.

The cost of the injection is covered under most provincial health plans, so you pay for the vaccine only. In some instances, health insurance may cover the cost of the vaccine as well.

Remember; carry a copy of your immunization record with you during your travels. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME FORM OF HEALTH TRAVEL INSURANCE.**

The following is a chart listing the vaccinations that may be required for travelling

VACCINATIONS REQUIRED FOR TRAVELLING

CATEGORY	VACCINE
ROUTINE VACCINATIONS REQUIRED	Diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DTP) Hepatitis B (HBV) Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) Measles (MMR) Poliomyelitis (OPV or IPV)a
SELECTIVE USE FOR TRAVELLERS	Cholera Influenza Hepatitis A (HAV)

	Japanese encephalitis Lyme disease Meningococcal disease Pneumococcal disease Rabies Tick-borne encephalitis Tuberculosis (BCG) Typhoid fever Yellow fever (for individual protection)
MANDATORY VACCINATIONS	Yellow fever (for protection of vulnerable countries) Meningococcal disease (required by Saudi Arabia for pilgrims visiting Mecca annually (Hajj) or at anytime (Umrah)

***PLEASE NOTE THAT VACCINES MUST BE STORED AT TEMPERATURES BETWEEN 2-8 DEGREES CELCIUS. (FRIDGE)**

For more information or clarification on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact the Student Health Centre at 364-2163. REMEMBER, don't be caught off guard, plan ahead.