



Travel health update

Travel health can be complicated, and advice for health professionals and travellers is ever-changing. In this regular feature, Jane Chiodini seeks out and presents the latest travel advice and information to help you keep your practice up to date. She also revisits areas of on-going concern, for spot checks and further clarification

NIVAQUINE DISCONTINUED

Nivaquine™ is a syrup preparation of the malaria chemoprophylactic drug chloroquine but it ceased to be available at the end of March 2015. As the only liquid preparation available for parents to give to their children when visiting malarious areas that remain chloroquine sensitive, it means the oral tablet chloroquine will need to be used instead. Dosage of the drug has always been calculated on the weight of the child and good tables of the selection of malaria chemoprophylaxis for children are available in the 2014 *Guidelines for malaria prevention in travellers from the UK* (page 36 and 38). Advice within the national guidance states that while it is preferable to avoid breaking and crushing tablets, the appropriate dose of these chemoprophylactics may be broken if dosing requires it and the drugs crushed if necessary and mixed with jam, honey, pasteurised yoghurt or similar food to aid administration to young children. Tablet-cutters can be purchased from some pharmacies or travel shops. If further advice is required a dispensing pharmacist should be consulted. For a variety of resources on malaria see <http://www.janechiodini.co.uk/news/help/malaria/>

MENINGITIS VACCINES IN THE NEWS

I'm writing this on the day Jeremy Hunt, the Health Secretary, announced that a

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deal had been reached on the NHS acquisition price of the new meningitis B vaccine had been reached, which means this particular vaccine (Bexsero) should be rolled out into the NHS childhood immunisation programme shortly. Meanwhile, meningitis ACWY vaccine is currently used for those with no spleen or splenic dysfunction, travellers going to sub Saharan Africa as healthcare workers, those visiting friends and relatives and those travelling for longer periods of time who will be in close contact with the local population. However, rising cases of meningitis W across the population, resulted in the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation concluding cause for significant concern. This has resulted in the recommendation of a programme to vaccinate all adolescents between 14 and 18 years of age with the Men ACWY conjugate vaccine in England and Wales. This plan has been accepted by the Government and further information is expected about implementation. For further information see <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/men-acwy-vaccine.aspx>

HOW VACCINES WORK

While the meningitis vaccine seems popular with the general public and awareness of the disease is high, we often struggle to get people to understand the overall value of vaccination. A recent video was published on a YouTube channel 'It's OK to be Smart' which dynamically explains the purpose and value of vaccination in a style that is both engaging and captivating. The presenter, biologist Joe Hanson PhD is also the creator/host/writer of 'PBS Digital Studios' where weekly science videos are posted. Others to look out for in connection with travel health on the search facility are

'Ebola explained' and 'What's the Deadliest Animal in the World' which focuses on malaria. See <https://www.youtube.com/user/itsokaytobesmart>

IMPROVE YOUR GEOGRAPHY!

The implications of geography in travel health are essential from the perspective of health risks at that destination and the resultant advice required. This doesn't mean you need to be a walking atlas, but some knowledge of where places are can be very helpful. Here are two resources to help improve your knowledge – in an entertaining format as well! Brainscape is an app and works by the use of flashcards, requesting the user



to reveal the answer when he or she is ready to see it and then rate their own confidence in their response by scoring from 1 to 5. Where confidence is low, the flash card will be repeated more often, helping the learner to acquire and retain knowledge as efficiently as possible. Once registered on the website (<https://www.brainscape.com>), some topics are free to use. World geography with 12 decks and 1,046 cards costs \$5.99 but I'm sure my use has already been worth it! Another site to increase geographical knowledge is the Lizard Point Quizzes website (www.lizardpoint.com). A family-run business, from Ontario, Canada, the site provides fun educational content for all ages. ●