



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 to keep your practice up to date. She also revisits areas of on-going concern, for spot-checks and further clarification

VACCINE INFORMATION

If you go to www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Immunisation/Keyvaccineinformation/index.htm you will find a number of excellent resource materials to use in your practice including a leaflet suitable for parents that documents the common side-effects of vaccinations that might occur in babies and young children up to 5 years of age; an image of a timeline for the introduction of vaccination programmes in the UK from 1796 to the present day; and the most up-to-date chart for the routine childhood immunisation programme. While you may not necessarily administer childhood vaccines and only undertake travel health in your practice, it is nevertheless important to understand the programme to ensure the traveller is up to date on immunisations for life in the UK. There is also a recently added and useful protocol for ordering, storing and handling vaccines. Standards in this important area of care are essential to delivering safe and adequate protection to travellers.

MIGRANT HEALTH RESOURCE

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has launched a new, freely available online resource to support primary care practitioners looking after patients who have come to live in the UK from abroad. Many of these resources will also be helpful when advising such patients who

choose to travel to see friends and relatives (VFRs).

The Migrant Health Guide, viewable at www.hpa.org.uk/migranthealthguide has been endorsed by the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Nursing. Organised in four main sections, this invaluable resource provides for example: details about language interpretation services, cultural competence and understanding, entitlements to NHS care, religion and health beliefs; country-specific information for more than 100 countries of origin of migrants to the UK; guides to a range of infectious diseases and other health concerns; patient resources in English and other languages.

VFRs are at higher risk than other travellers for several infections including enteric fever and malaria. The new guide recommends taking every opportunity to enquire about travel plans during consultations for other matters, to ensure that VFR travellers receive appropriate advice, and links to the NaTHNaC site for that advice.

LOCATE SERVICE FROM THE FCO

Are you aware of LOCATE, a free service provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for British nationals travelling to or living outside the UK. The details provided upon registration will help embassy and crisis staff contact the traveller and give better assistance in an emergency such as a

natural or manmade disaster or civil disturbance. The service can also reduce delay and worry in times of stress for a family and friends at home. Go to www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/staying-safe/Locate/ for more information.

NaTHNaC ADVICE LINE SURVEY

Callers to the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) telephone advice line are encouraged to provide feedback on their experience of

the service by completing a short, anonymous online survey. It is suggested that feedback is given as soon as possible after calling the advice line. The survey comprises only four questions and is extremely quick to complete. I would strongly encourage you to help NaTHNaC evaluate the quality of

this key service as it strives to improve its resources for health professionals. Go to www.nathnac.org/pro/news/advicelinesurvey.htm

PHARMACISTS AND TRAVEL

You may have noticed that many pharmacy chains are becoming increasingly involved in travel medicine. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society has linked for the second time with the Faculty of Travel Medicine to hold a one-day educational event on 19 March 2011 in London, entitled Travel medicine – delivering a quality service. This programme would also be very interesting for any healthcare professional working in primary care – www.rpharms.com (go to Events in the What's happening? menu) ●

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