



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

HEPATITIS A BOOSTERS

Chapter 17 of the Green Book on hepatitis A was updated on 4 December 2013 and on reading it recently, I noted the information on page 154 regarding 'reinforcing immunisation' included information about the booster which has changed from 20 to 25 years. This section says 'A booster dose of hepatitis A vaccine should be given at six to 12 months after the initial dose. This results in a substantial increase in the antibody titre and will give immunity beyond ten years, however, effective protection beyond ten years cannot be assured until this booster is given. Until further evidence is available on persistence of protective immunity, a further booster at 25 years is indicated for those at ongoing risk'. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hepatitis-a-the-green-book-chapter-17>. With the first hepatitis A vaccines being launched in the UK in 1993, if one was to follow this timeline it means if courses were completed that year, no booster doses would be due until at least 2018, and by that time the information may have changed again!

YELLOW FEVER AND NATHNAC

Completing my yellow fever (YF) return for 2013 to NaTHNaC online last week (note this must be undertaken by the end of March 2014 at the very latest, and

if a registered YF centre in Scotland to TRAVAX by 1 March 2014), I noticed one of the questions included the number of vaccines given for certificate purposes only. This question will be a 'requirement' in the 2014 NaTHNaC returns a year from now. I keep a spreadsheet of all yellow fever vaccines to which I can then add required information regarding age groups etc. so this is something I will add in. I'm aware many surgeries simply do a 'search' for details of YF vaccines given, so perhaps templates can be developed to capture this additional information to ensure it is collected. Quite a few changes have occurred regarding NaTHNaC's requirements for yellow fever registration including the revision of Conditions of Designation and Code of Practice and it is recommended that all those administering YF vaccine undertake the training. For more details see http://www.nathnac.org/pro/Yellow_Fever_Vaccination_Centre_Information.htm

TRAVAX AND fitfortravel CHANGES

fitfortravel is the public database for travellers, developed by Health Protection Scotland. *fitfortravel* has had a 'makeover' with a fresh bright and attractive new look. The previous useful information remains, but with a modernised appearance and effective search engines for the variety of available leaflets. This website provides

an excellent resource for travellers. See www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

TRAVAX has reduced some of its subscription rates recently, making it potentially more affordable to practices and individuals working in the NHS in England who need to pay for the service. For information,

single registration (for one individual, must use an NHS email address which is not shared) will cost £25 per year (plus VAT); and GP Practice registration through commissioning intermediary (will cover all within practice), £60 per year (plus VAT). For further details, get in touch with Mary O'Neill, the TRAVAX administrator, via email [NSS](mailto:HPSTravax@nhs.net). HPSTravax@nhs.net or telephone 0141 300 1164

AVIAN FLU

There was a rise in the number of cases of Avian flu (A/H7n9) virus reported in China in the run up to the Chinese New Year on 31 January, attributed to the increase in the import and slaughter of poultry for the celebrations. Public Health England has warned travellers, that while occasional human-to-human transmission cannot be ruled out, the main risk is from close contact with poultry, so visits to live bird markets should be avoided. Nurses should be alert to the possibility of avian flu in travellers presenting with severe respiratory illness or flu-like illness within 10 days of returning from China, including Hong Kong. ●



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