

10 May 2017

Dear Colleagues

Health Guidance for Travellers 2017/18

As we are now approaching the holiday season I am sharing with you some resources from Health Protection Scotland (HPS) to help prepare travellers from Scotland going abroad. These materials are intended to help raise awareness about the need to think about travel health and travel vaccinations. PDF formats of the posters are attached and these can be printed by an ordinary printer. A high quality version of the poster, to be printed by professional printers, can be downloaded here: Travel Health Poster: (<http://downloads-hps.scot.nhs.uk/fft-gp-poster/fft-gp-travel-poster-17-03-2017-prof-print.pdf>)

Posters

The poster aims to help both patients and GPs to recognise the value of accessing/providing travel health advice in a timely fashion and HPS has tried to demonstrate the impact imported infectious disease may have on individual health and the health of the wider public. It also helps signpost patients to seek advice from the most appropriate and reliable sources for general travel advice e.g. from Fitfortravel (www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk), and NHS inform (<https://www.nhsinform.scot>) and to make appointments at the GP practice for specific clinical advice, at least 6-8 weeks before travel.

The poster is styled with the same toucan logo and colour scheme as the HPS www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk website. A 'Basic Travel Advice' flyer in similar style has been professionally printed by HPS and tear off packs are available upon request to GP practices. This consistent styling will help familiarise both patients and GP practices with the Fitfortravel brand and ultimately to encourage colleagues and patients to access all the travel health information that HPS provides. The contact address to request leaflets is nss.hpstravelteam@nhs.net.

Information Leaflets and Clinical Advice

Also attached are two PDF formatted advice leaflets, one on mosquito bite avoidance and the other on cyclospora advice for travellers. Both were developed by HPS in collaboration with Public Health England in response to specific travel health related events during 2015/16.

- **Mosquito bite avoidance leaflet** – includes general information relating to malaria, dengue and yellow fever, as well as detail specific to Zika virus and risks during pregnancy.
- **Cyclospora advice for travellers** – contains general precautions to be taken with food, water and personal hygiene. Development of the leaflet was prompted by the large number of cases of cyclosporiasis reported in UK travellers in both 2015 and 2016, linked specifically with travel to Mexico.

Clinical travel health advice is available to GP practices from the TRAVAX website and the Green Book for immunisation guidance (links to the sites below).

<http://www.travax.nhs.uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>

Further Information on prescriptions, vaccines and associated advice

Correspondence received over the past few years suggests that practices and staff may not be clear on which prescriptions, vaccines and associated advice are included as part of NHS provision through GMS Additional Services, and which are not included within NHS services and can be charged for. Guidance on this is available from the following sources as below.

<http://www.travax.nhs.uk/vaccination-practice/further-information/vaccine-charges.aspx>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/travel-immunisation>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/hepatitis-b-immunisations>

Provision of immunisation, including travel vaccines, may change in the future as a result of the GP contract negotiations.

Carrying medicine and/or medical equipment

Advice and detailed information about carrying medication abroad and what requires a confirmatory letter from the GP, is provided and updated by other agencies such as the Home Office and Foreign Consulates, as each country may have different requirements and this not provided by HPS. However, HPS provides some general advice and links to other websites as below.

<http://www.travax.nhs.uk/health-information/general-health-advice/travelling-with-controlled-drugs.aspx>

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/travelling-with-medicines.aspx> <https://www.gov.uk/travelling-controlled-drugs>

Patients need to contact their travel agents or the Foreign Consulates to check the requirements of carrying medicine or medical equipment in plenty of time before travel. Some examples are included below.

<http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/medicines-abroad/>

<http://www.thomascookairlines.com/MedicalEquipmentAssistance.aspx>

<http://www.thomascookairlines.com/MedicationAssistance.aspx>

Female Genital Mutilation and Early and Forced Marriage

Healthcare practitioners should be vigilant to the possibility of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Early and Forced Marriage. They should be alert to the issues involved and know how to escalate any concerns they may have. In the case of FGM, girls may be taken overseas to have the procedure carried out during “holidays”. Those who are being forced to marry are often taken abroad against their will or may travel unaware of what has been planned for them when they arrive. Individuals in either situation are unlikely to present for pre-travel advice, but no opportunity should be missed to identify and speak to a potential victim.

To learn more about FGM and what to do if you suspect that a girl is at risk, you may wish to access the FGM pages on TRAVAX and Fitfortravel from which there are links provided to other valuable sources of information. A link to the recently published guidance (Dec 2016) from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) on FGM for professionals working in travel health services is also included below.

<http://www.travax.nhs.uk/health-information/general-health-advice/female-genital-mutilation.aspx>

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/female-genital-mutilation.aspx>

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-005783>

To learn more about forced marriage, multi-agency practice guidelines have been issued by the Scottish Government (link attached below).

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/10/4797>

Advice regarding Early and Forced Marriage is on the Scottish Government website (link provided below)

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/10/1148/3>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/forcedmarriage>

Schistosomiasis (including school trips)

Schistosomiasis (or bilharzia), is the most frequently reported parasitic worm disease in Scottish travellers. It is commonly found in tropical and sub-tropical countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Practitioners in primary care need to be aware of the risks and how to avoid infection. This is particularly so for school groups and young adult volunteers who may plan to engage in water based activities as part of their travel experience. Also, returning travellers may present to primary care and so it is useful to know that diagnosis and treatment of schistosomiasis is relatively straightforward and effective.

A PowerPoint resource for use by Practice Nurses and others wanting to know more about the disease can be accessed from the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) website below.

<http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/travel-and-international-health.aspx>

In addition, the publication *Travel Health Guidance for Schools* (HPS updated Jan 2017) provides practical advice on health considerations for those going on an overseas excursions, and can be downloaded from TRAVAX (<http://www.travax.nhs.uk/health-information/special-groups/school-groups.aspx>) or fitfortravel (<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/school-groups.aspx>)

HPS have recently opened up the news and outbreaks sections on TRAVAX, so even without a password individuals can access some of these resources.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes that form a stylized name.

Michael Taylor
Primary Care Division