

Vaccinations and Travel

For the highest level of protection against vaccine-preventable diseases, your patients who travel should keep their immunizations up to date, and depending on their destination country, receive supplemental vaccines to protect themselves and their fellow travelers.

For these patients, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises you follow recommendations based on scientific evidence of benefits and risk, and in the cases where there is little or no data, on expert opinion.

- The CDC's most up-to-date immunization recommendations are published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, located on the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov/mmwr.
- The Texas Department of State Health Services recommends directing questions relating to immunizations for foreign travel to the Infectious Disease Control Unit (IDCU) at (512) 458-7676.
- Refer to the CDC Travelers' Health Web page at wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx for up-to-the-minute updates on routine, recommended, and required vaccinations.

General Recommendations

All travelers should be up to date with their immunizations against poliomyelitis, pneumococcal invasive, diphtheria, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib), hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, pertussis, rubella, tetanus, and varicella.

- A patient who does not have these immunizations should receive vaccines appropriate for his or her age and immunization status, regardless of international travel plans.
- All vaccines can be safely and effectively administered simultaneously without increasing the rate of adverse reactions or impairing the antibody response.
- If a patient misses a follow-up vaccine or booster at the recommended time, adding extra doses or restarting the vaccine series is unnecessary, with the exception of oral typhoid vaccine.
- The yellow fever vaccine can be administered simultaneously with any currently available vaccine.

International Travel

- The International Health Regulations require the yellow fever vaccination for travel to tropical South America and to certain countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The Saudi Arabian government requires the meningococcal vaccination for annual travel during the Hajj.

Special Considerations

- Immune globulin given concurrently with measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) and varicella vaccines can impact antibody response. Patients should receive the MMR three to 11 months after receiving the immune globulin, and the varicella vaccine at least five months after receiving immune globulin or other blood products.
- Take special care when providing travel immunizations for patients with acute illnesses and for last-minute travelers.
- Finally, your traveling patients (like your local patients) may encounter unexpected allergic reactions or side effects. Federal law requires physicians and other health care professionals to file a report if a patient experiences clinically significant adverse events following an immunization with specified vaccines. See the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System section of this manual.

For More Information About Vaccinations and Travel

For information about ordering an International Certificate of Vaccination and for recorded messages on travel-related health topics, your patients can call the Travelers' Health Automated Information Line toll-free at (877) FYI-TRIP (394-8747).

Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Traveler's Health: Yellow Book. CDC Health Information for International Travel 2008. <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowBook.aspx>.

Immunization Branch, Texas Department of State Health Services. Vaccine Management: Yellow Fever Information. http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/vac_manage2.shtm#yellow.