

TRAVEL VACCINATION, MEDICATION AND ADVICE– Basic Guidance for Practices

Vaccination and Advice:

There are some Travel Vaccinations for which GPs are paid for providing on the **NHS**. These include **smallpox, typhoid, polio, diphtheria, tetanus and Hepatitis A** and prescriptions should be done on a **GP10**. GPs are paid for this work through the Global Sum. Only if a doctor opts-out of the vaccination and immunisation additional service will a GP be able to refuse to give these public health travel vaccinations.

All other travel vaccinations can be charged for under **Schedule 5 Fees and Charges** of The National Health Service Regulations (2004) and should be prescribed on a **private prescription**.

The supply of travel vaccinations is a predominantly private service, and **it is appropriate for the fee charged by the GP to reflect the necessary advice**. We do not advise GPs to separate the fee for advice from the fee for administration of the vaccination because some of the vaccines are given on the NHS and charging for giving travel advice when administering Hepatitis A or Typhoid would be charging the patient for an NHS service. When a GP gives a vaccination it is good practice to advise the patient on the efficacy / value of the vaccine and to discuss relevant side-effects or concerns the patient may have. The advice should be accepted as part of the normal process in the provision of travel vaccinations

BCG vaccination/Tuberculin testing – the school BCG immunisation programme ceased in Autumn 2005 and so there may be regular requests for BCG vaccination/tuberculin testing for travel in the future. BCG vaccines and tests are not available in Primary Care.

The following groups of people can be referred to the TB contact clinic for BCG/Tuberculin testing:

- 1) Anyone who is travelling for 3 months or more to a country with a high prevalence of TB (includes Indian Subcontinent, Sub-Saharan Africa, Former Soviet Union), or anyone under 16 years of age.
- 2) Anyone requiring tuberculin testing prior to working abroad e.g. Canada or USA where the authorities request a recent tuberculin test (even if there is a history of BCG vaccination and a BCG scar is present). – **THESE PATIENTS/EMPLOYER WILL BE CHARGED BY THE CLINIC**
- 3) Youths going to USA for camp/work usually have to be screened and have a Mantoux test at the clinic.

Hepatitis B - while Immunisation for Hepatitis A is available free of charge on the NHS in connection with travel abroad, Hepatitis B is not routinely available free of charge and therefore GPs can charge for this vaccination when requested in connection with travel abroad.

*Practices **cannot** charge their own patients for Hep B vaccination for Occupational Health reasons. They can however use a buddy system with another practice (i.e. refer patients to their buddy practice who can provide the vaccination and charge the patient) OR enter into a private contract with an employer to provide the service either to a group of employees or for a single employee where the fee is paid by the employer.*

Medication:

GPs can charge for a **private prescription** in relation to travel overseas, under **Schedule 5** – regulation 24.

“The contractor may demand or accept a fee or other remuneration –

*1. for **prescribing or providing drugs, medicines or appliances** (including a collection of such drugs, medicines or appliances in the form of a travel kit) which a patient requires to have in his possession **solely in anticipation of the onset of an ailment or occurrence of an injury while he is outside the United Kingdom but for which he is requiring treatment when the medicine is prescribed;***

*2. for prescribing or providing drugs or medicines for **malaria chemoprophylaxis**”*

Private travel clinic

Practices can advise patients re the option of obtaining travel advice, vaccination and treatment from a private travel clinic, but remember that unless the practice has opted out of the vaccination and immunisation additional service they are obliged to provide vaccination against smallpox, diphtheria, tetanus, polio and hepatitis A as above, under the NHS unless the patient prefers to have these at the private clinic.

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MOB/RH*