

Holiday health tips - getting the right vaccinations | Skyscanner Australia

Getting sick while overseas is the fastest way to ruin your holiday and checking into a foreign hospital is definitely not on most traveller's itineraries. Read [Skyscanner Australia's](#) tip to avoid getting ill on your hols.

The more you travel, the higher the chance that you're going to get sick. Vaccinations can help minimise those risks. According to [Vaccine Hub](#) 69% of hepatitis A cases in New South Wales are from overseas travel. Of those, two thirds were returning travellers and on average, every second infected traveller passed it on to someone else – not an ideal souvenir!

[Smart Traveller](#) recommends that travellers start planning their travel health at least six weeks prior to departure. Depending on where you're travelling to, you'll want to know to the current health situation. Has there been an outbreak of [Zika virus](#)? Dengue fever? What about malaria?

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Childhood vaccinations

Anyone who grew up in Australia will likely have gone through Australia's childhood vaccination program. Kids were vaccinated against polio, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella and varicella. If your childhood is but a distant memory it might be time to ask your doctor about getting a booster vaccination.



Hepatitis A & Typhoid

Travellers to countries where tap water is dodgy should be up to date with Hep A and typhoid vaccines. You'll know which countries are suspect when you see recommendations to brush your teeth with bottled water – this is your clue to consider Hep A & typhoid vaccinations. It's worth knowing that not all vaccines are administered by needle – some are via oral capsules.

Hep A is found in the stool of an infected person (that's not the bar stool either!) and is spread through poor personal hygiene. Typhoid is similarly spread through food prepared by a person infected with the typhoid virus. A good rule of thumb is to avoid any food or drinks that have come into contact with tap water, for example salad. Fruits like bananas that you peel yourself are a smart choice.



Photo credit: Sanofi Pasteur

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B vaccine comes in two doses a few weeks apart, making it imperative to start planning vaccinations early. Hep B is recommended for frequent, high-risk or long-term travellers. Hep B is most common in South East Asia, India, parts of South America, Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East and is commonly found in body fluids.

Rabies

If you're travelling to a country or territory where rabies has not been eradicated (the World Health Organisation lists more than 150 of them) and if you're anticipating contact with animals, a rabies vaccination is recommended. Hikers, bikers and campers take note. In up to 99% of human cases, rabies virus is transmitted by domestic dogs, mostly the result of dog bites or scratches. Dog lovers are best to practice tough love while overseas and not be tempted to pat that cute dog hanging around your beachfront bure.



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Yellow fever

Yellow fever is a mosquito-borne disease that kills around 30,000 people each year. The virus is endemic in tropical areas of Latin America and Africa and the WHO says yellow fever has increased over the past 20 years. There is no treatment for yellow fever though 85% of those infected suffer little more than fever, aches & vomiting. Why take the risk? Yellow fever vaccine is the single most important factor in preventing infection. The yellow in the name reflects the jaundice-like pallor sufferers display.

Japanese encephalitis virus

Another mosquito-borne virus with no cure, Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) accounts for up to 20,400 deaths globally each year. Don't be confused by the name, this virus is found in 24 South East Asian and Western Pacific regions (the name comes from the first documented case in Japan in the 1800's). JEV is transmitted to humans through bites from infected mosquitoes. Stay safe and get a vaccination if you intend to travel to an area known to be susceptible to JEV.

Malaria

What is it with mosquitoes? Probably one of the most common question travellers ask their GP is 'Is there a malaria vaccine?' While trials are underway, at the moment the answer is no. And, with almost half the world's population at risk from malaria, you really should take preventative measures. Neck to ankle clothing doesn't sound very sexy, but covering up is the best way to avoid being bitten, along with a good douse of anti-mozzie repellent. Antimalarial medicines help too. Sub-Saharan Africa is the greatest at risk area but there are almost 100 countries with ongoing malaria transmission.

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Note: Skyscanner Australia recommends that travellers seek advice from their GP before travelling overseas.

References: <http://smartraveller.gov.au/guide/all-travellers/health/health-checks-and-vaccinations.html> <http://www.vaccinehub.com.au>

Don't let the risk of illness discourage your wanderlust. Check out [Skyscanner Australia](#) for the [cheapest airfares](#), [hotels](#) and [car hire](#).

About the author