



# **Risk Assessment - in the Travel Health Consultation**

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# Conflicts of interest:

- None.

Many thanks to:

NECTM for assistance to get here

and Trailfinders for giving me time out of clinic



# Session overview:

- Risk and the travel risk assessment
- Individualized
- Conducting one
- Key resources - used in UK
- Challenges?
- **Fitting it all in to appointment time!**
- Practice and improvement – assessment tools
- Roles & responsibilities - ours and the traveller's



# Hazards and risk:

## Hazard:

Something that is dangerous and likely to cause a problem or damage. (Cambridge Dictionary)

## Risk:

- the possibility of something **undesirable** happening (Copilot AI)
- combines the **likelihood** of exposure to a threat with its **level of impact** (British Standards Institute)
- An uncertain event that could lead to **damage, injury or loss**, which can be **avoided through preemptive action** (Business dictionary)



# In the travel context

- British Safety Council:

“a systematic process of identifying hazards and evaluating any associated risks (within a workplace), then implementing reasonable control measures to remove or reduce them.”

Can apply this to traveller – the tools we have allow for this:

# Our role during travel health consultation:

- Promote health, safety and wellbeing of the traveler – **assisting them to stay healthy whilst abroad**
- **Consultation has two parts:**
- **Risk assessment:**  
Information gathering exercise, identifying the risks to health, forms the foundation on which to base all our advice, discussions and recommendations.
- **Risk management:**  
how to mitigate these risks – reducing likelihood &/ or severity

# Risk assessment applied to the traveller

## 1) Information needed:

A) traveller's personal health status

B) itinerary

## 2) Identify hazards at destination country

– see national guidance

# Traveller info:

- Age, gender identity
- Medical history (family)

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- Current health status
- Females – pregnancy, menstrual issues, FGM
- Disability
- Mental health
- Additional needs
- Medication
- Allergies
- Vaccination history
- Previous travel experience
- Existing knowledge/ interest in health risks of travel





## Itinerary details:

- Destination(s)
- Departure date
- Length of stay
- Modes of transport
- Purpose of trip and planned activities
- Quality of accommodation
- Financial budget
- Healthcare standards at destination
- Relevant comprehensive insurance provision





No two travellers or  
two trips are the same  
- many variables

# Risk management

- 1) How likely to encounter hazards? How severe an impact?
- 2) Advise appropriately – e.g. vaccines, prophylaxis  
Also behaviour, recommend travel health products
- 3) Know when to refer to specialist – seek further expert advice

What could possibly go wrong?



# We use NaTHNac in clinic

- Travel Health Pro
- [www.Travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.Travelhealthpro.org.uk)
- E.g. Travelling to Ecuador

# Risk matrix

- Cannot eliminate **all** risks completely - can often reduce them

**Risk management =**  
Help move the traveller  
from **red high risk area**  
to **green low risk**

Risk Matrix		Severity				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Very High	Very High	Very High
	Likely	Medium	High	High	Very High	Very High
	Possible	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

# Rabies - scenario 1

- Woman in Goa, India eating out with family.
- Disturbs sleeping dog under table – kicked it as sat down. Bit her. No pre-exposure rabies vaccines – ‘provoked attack’, dog seemed otherwise well.
- No action taken - returned home. Several weeks later to GP c/o headache.
- Later dies in hospital.
- **UNFORTUNATELY:**
- Lacked knowledge of rabies risk and need for treatment. India high risk country for rabies, especially dogs. Bite was ‘possible’ and impact was ‘severe’ **RED CATEGORY**



# Rabies - scenario 2

- Tom, 23, came to clinic – x3 rabies pre-exposure vaccine.
- In depth discussion about rabies virus, mode of transmission, need for treatment. Had seen our poster!
- Friend Jim had Not received any vaccines pre-trip ...‘it’s only Morocco’
- **Jim got bitten by dog on the beach** – went to local hospital - given vaccine but no HRIG. Insurance company said fly back to UK for it – returned next day!
- **FORTUNATELY for Jim**
- Tom knew all about rabies risk and treatment – advised friend accordingly, ultimately low risk as acted appropriately shifts down to **GREEN CATEGORY**

**TRAVELLING ABROAD?**

**RABIES**

**99.9%**

**FATALITY RATE<sup>1</sup>**

**100% PREVENTABLE WITH VACCINATION<sup>2</sup>**

- Approximately 60,000 people die from rabies each year, mostly in Asia and Africa<sup>3</sup>
- Children are at particular risk<sup>4</sup>
- Vaccination is the best way to avoid this fatal disease<sup>4</sup>

**DON'T TAKE THE RISK**

**GET VACCINATED AND GET PROTECTED**

Talk to your Healthcare Professional about vaccinating against rabies

**NOVARTIS**  
VACCINES



# Key guidance documents:

## Step by step guide

### Available online:

Ref: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/rcn-travel-health-nursing-uk-pub-010-573>



## **RCN Travel Health Nursing:** career and competence development

CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE





Faculty of Travel Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR PROVIDING A TRAVEL HEALTH SERVICE



ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS AND  
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW  
TRAVEL MEDICINE

# 2024 CDC YELLOW BOOK

Health Information for  
International Travel



# Time management: Pre-consultation

- Ask traveller to complete health questionnaire online including trip details
- Use travel health links – for your country
- e.g. in UK ‘Travelhealthpro’ or ‘Fitfortravel’

**Traveller can start researching  
before arrive in clinic**



**TRAVEL RISK ASSESSMENT FORM** – ideally to be completed by traveller prior to appointment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Male  Female   
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUPPLY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TRIP IN THE SECTIONS BELOW**

Date of departure: \_\_\_\_\_ Total length of trip: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY TO BE VISITED	EXACT LOCATION OR REGION	CITY OR RURAL	LENGTH OF STAY
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____

Have you taken out travel insurance for this trip? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you plan to travel abroad again in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF TRAVEL AND PURPOSE OF TRIP - PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday	<input type="checkbox"/> Staying in hotel	<input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking
<input type="checkbox"/> Business trip	<input type="checkbox"/> Cruise ship trip	<input type="checkbox"/> Camping/hostels
<input type="checkbox"/> Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Safari	<input type="checkbox"/> Adventure
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilgrimage	<input type="checkbox"/> Diving
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical tourism	<input type="checkbox"/> Visiting friends/family

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SUPPLY DETAILS OF YOUR PERSONAL MEDICAL HISTORY**

	YES	NO	DETAILS
Are you fit and well today			
Any allergies including food, latex, medication			
Severe reaction to a vaccine before			
Tendency to faint with injections			
Any surgical operations in the past, including e.g. your spleen or thymus gland removed			
Recent chemotherapy/radiotherapy/organ transplant			
Anaemia			
Bleeding/clotting disorders (including history of DVT)			
Heart disease (e.g. angina, high blood pressure)			
Diabetes			
Disability			
Epilepsy/seizures			
Gastrointestinal (stomach) complaints			
Liver and/or kidney problems			
HIV/AIDS			
Immune system condition			

# Risk assessment standard form

or invite 10 mins early to complete

- Whole families with young children consider telephone consultation - arrive in clinic knowing what to expect – can minimize anxiety for children ....AND parents!

**TRAVEL RISK ASSESSMENT FORM** – ideally to be completed by traveller prior to appointment.

Name:		Date of birth:	
		Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
E mail:		Telephone number:	
		Mobile number:	
<b>PLEASE SUPPLY INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TRIP IN THE SECTIONS BELOW</b>			
Date of departure:		Total length of trip:	
<b>COUNTRY TO BE VISITED</b>	<b>EXACT LOCATION OR REGION</b>	<b>CITY OR RURAL</b>	<b>LENGTH OF STAY</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
Have you taken out travel insurance for this trip?			
Do you plan to travel abroad again in the future?			
<b>TYPE OF TRAVEL AND PURPOSE OF TRIP - PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday	<input type="checkbox"/> Staying in hotel	<input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking	<u>Additional information</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Business trip	<input type="checkbox"/> Cruise ship trip	<input type="checkbox"/> Camping/hostels	
<input type="checkbox"/> Expatriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Safari	<input type="checkbox"/> Adventure	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilgrimage	<input type="checkbox"/> Diving	
<input type="checkbox"/> Health care worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical tourism	<input type="checkbox"/> Visiting friends/family	
<b>PLEASE SUPPLY DETAILS OF YOUR PERSONAL MEDICAL HISTORY</b>			
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
Are you fit and well today			
Any allergies including food, latex, medication			
Severe reaction to a vaccine before			
Tendency to faint with injections			
Any surgical operations in the past, including e.g. your spleen or thymus gland removed			
Recent chemotherapy/radiotherapy/organ transplant			
Anaemia			
Bleeding/clotting disorders (including history of DVT)			
Heart disease (e.g. angina, high blood pressure)			
Diabetes			
Disability			
Epilepsy/seizures			
Gastrointestinal (stomach) complaints			
Liver and/or kidney problems			
HIV/AIDS			
Immune system condition			

# Use your approved National Guidance resources: These are our UK ones

- 1) NaTHNaC: (England) [www.Travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.Travelhealthpro.org.uk)
- 2) Travax: (Scotland) [www.Fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.Fitfortravel.nhs.uk)
- 3) Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office:  
[www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)
- 4) ‘The Green Book’:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>
- 5) [www.JaneChiodini.co.uk](http://www.JaneChiodini.co.uk)

# Categorising risks: to health, safety and security.

- Airborne
- Insect borne
- Contaminated food and water
- Climate related
- Environmental factors
- Political situations
- Accidents
- Exacerbation of existing medical conditions



# During consultation:

- Appointment length? 30 mins/ traveller? Minimum 20.
- **Information gathering exercise - Ask the right questions.**
- Quality of communication – VERY important.
- Our role – assess traveller’s knowledge and understanding provide accurate information, guide them in making wise choices
- Good consultation employs a lot of skills and awareness
- Nice to have a chat but.....Keep travellers on track!
- Allow them to ask questions and check they’ve understood discussions.
- Record keeping - documentation



## TRAVEL RISK MANAGEMENT FORM

FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONAL USE ONLY IN CONJUNCTION with TRAVEL RISK ASSESSMENT FORM					
<b>Patient Name:</b>		<b>dob:</b>			
Childhood immunisation history checked:					
Additional information:					
<b>National database consulted</b> for travel vaccines recommended for this trip and malaria chemoprophylaxis (if required):					
<b>NaTHNaC:</b>		<b>TRAVAX:</b>		<b>Other:</b>	
Disease protection advised	Yes	Disease protection advised	Yes	Malaria Chemoprophylaxis Recommendation	Yes
BCG/Mantoux		Influenza		Atovaquone/proguanil	
Cholera		Meningitis ACWY		Chloroquine only	
Dip/tetanus/polio		MMR		Chloroquine and proguanil	
Hepatitis A		Rabies		Doxycycline	
Hepatitis B		TBE		Mefloquine	
Hepatitis A+B		Typhoid		Proguanil only	
Hepatitis A + Typhoid		Yellow fever		Emergency standby	
Japanese encephalitis		Other		Weight of child:	
Vaccine and General Travel Advice required/provided					
Potential side effects of vaccines discussed					
Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) from packaging or from <a href="http://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/">www.medicines.org.uk/emc/</a> given					
Patient consent for vaccination obtained:		verbal <input type="checkbox"/>	written <input type="checkbox"/>		
Post vaccination advice given:		verbal <input type="checkbox"/>	written <input type="checkbox"/>		

Documentation that childhood imms were asked about with space to add additional information if there was an issue over this factor

Documentation that the website used for the pre-travel health risk assessment, regarding recommendations for vaccines and malaria chemoprophylaxis was recorded

Documentation that consent and advice around the vaccines given was recorded



# Travel Risk Management form continued



**General travel advice** leaflet given (all topics below in the surgery/clinic advice leaflet) and patient asked to read entire leaflet due to insufficient time to advise verbally on every topic: **Yes / No**

Items ticked below indicate topics discussed specifically within the consultation:

Prevention of accidents		Mosquito bite prevention	
Personal safety and security		Malaria prevention advice	
Food and water borne risks		Medical preparation	
Travellers' diarrhoea advice		Sun and heat advice	
Sexual health & blood borne virus risk		Journey/transport advice	
Rabies specific advice		Insurance advice	

**Other specific specialised advice / information given on:**

e.g. COVID-19 supportive advice, smoking advice for a long-haul flight; altitude advice; prevention of schistosomiasis etc.

Source of advice used for further information : **NaTHNaC** **TRAVAX** **Other**

**OR** no additional specialised advice given

General travel advice leaflet given (all topics below in the surgery/clinic advice leaflet) and patient asked to read entire leaflet due to insufficient time to advise verbally on every topic: **Yes / No**


**Travel Health Advice Leaflet**

The following information will help you to stay healthy on your trip.  
Please make sure you read it following on from your appointment with us.

**WATER**  
Diseases can be caught from drinking contaminated water, or swimming in it. Unless you know the water supply is safe where you are staying, **ONLY USE** (in order of preference)

1. Boiled water
2. Bottled water or canned drinks
3. Water treated by a sterilising agent.

This includes water used to make ice cubes in drinks and water for cleaning your teeth



**SWIMMING**  
It is safer to swim in water that is well chlorinated. If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean, avoid swimming in fresh water lakes and streams. You can catch a parasitic disease called schistosomiasis from such places. This disease is also known as Bilharzia. It is also wise never to go barefoot, but to wear protective footwear when out, even on the beach. Other diseases can be caught from sand and soil, particularly wet soil.

**FOOD**  
Contaminated food is the commonest source of many diseases abroad. You can help prevent illness by following these guidelines for advice on consuming food and beverages:

Category	SAFE	PROBABLY SAFE	UNSAFE
<b>Beverages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbonated soft drinks</li> <li>Carbonated water</li> <li>Boiled water</li> <li>Purified water (iodine or chlorine)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh citrus juices</li> <li>Bottled water</li> <li>Packaged (machine-made ice)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tap water</li> <li>Chipped ice</li> <li>Unpasteurized milk</li> </ul>
<b>Food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hot thoroughly grilled, boiled</li> <li>Processed and packaged</li> <li>Cooked vegetables and peeled* fruits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dry items</li> <li>Hyperosmolar items (such as jam and syrup)</li> <li>Washed vegetables and fruit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salads</li> <li>Sauces and 'salsa'</li> <li>Uncooked seafood</li> <li>Raw or poorly cooked meats</li> <li>Unpeeled* fruits</li> <li>Unpasteurized dairy products</li> <li>Cold desserts</li> </ul>
<b>Setting</b>	Recommended restaurants	Local homes	Street vendors

Reference: Ericsson CD. Prevention of Travelers Diarrhea in: Keystone J, Freedman D, Kozarsky P, Connor B and Norddurft H. Eds. Travel Medicine 3rd Edition. Saunders, an imprint of Elsevier Inc; 2013. p. 191-196

\* Peeled fruits for example bananas: Unpeeled fruits for example, raspberries, strawberries.

Another source of calories is alcohol! If you drink to excess, alcohol could lead you to become carefree and ignore these precautions.

**PERSONAL HYGIENE**  
Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the 'faecal-oral' route. To help prevent this, always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating and before handling food. Using hand gel is another sensible option.

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# Email follow up factsheets

## - post appointment

- Some travellers very anxious needle phobic
- Medico-legal aspects of providing sufficient information
- Reinforcing messages given during appointment - and adding to them where time constraints
- Email format means accessible while they're away
- Useful additional links – can personalise it
- E.g. In relation to pre-existing medical conditions
- Allows traveller to do their own further research .....

# Communicating messages

- Before, during, after consultation
- Different media: Visuals, emails, fact sheets, verbally, podcasts, Youtube, endless options
- Use appropriate credible **sources for YOUR country**
- Also CDC, ECDC, WHO
- UK: NaTHNaC - Travel Health Pro and Travax. Also Green Book, FCDO



Most impact in a short time?



TRAVELLING ABROAD?

RABIES

99.9%

FATALITY RATE<sup>1</sup>

100% PREVENTABLE WITH VACCINATION<sup>2</sup>

- Approximately 60,000 people die from rabies each year, mostly in Asia and Africa<sup>3</sup>
- Children are at particular risk<sup>4</sup>
- Vaccination is the best way to avoid this fatal disease<sup>4</sup>

**DON'T TAKE THE RISK  
GET VACCINATED AND GET PROTECTED**

Talk to your Healthcare Professional  
about vaccinating against rabies

# Maintaining Wellbeing – thinking beyond vaccines

e.g.

Accidents

- Condition of roads and vehicles
- Water – swimming, water sports
- Climate – unexpected events – fires, floods, extreme heat
- Special risk groups – additional vulnerabilities

# Improving consultations:

- Practice, practice practice!
- Use assessment tool for self reflection
- Peer to peer review – sit in on each other's sessions
- Share case studies and learn from each other
- Join/ create a travel medicine community – set up private FB page
- Online meetings with colleagues
- Quality guidance documents



# Competency assessment

## Good Practice Guidance for Providing a travel health service

RCPSG

Competency Assessment Tool for Travel Health Practitioners				
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE	Not applicable to current role	Self-reflection Record: Met (M) or Needs Further Development (NFD) (Also, initial & date)	Supervising practitioner Record: Met (M) or Needs Further Development (NFD) (Also, initial & date)	Action plan As agreed with supervising practitioner
<b>Section A: Knowledge</b>				
A1	Provides evidence that Foundation immunisation training including competency assessment has been undertaken as per <i>The National Minimum Standards and Core Curriculum for Immunisation Training for Registered Healthcare Practitioners</i>			
A2	Provides evidence of annual face to face CPR and annual anaphylaxis training			
A3	Provides evidence of Safeguarding training to the appropriate level for children and adults, including specific Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) training			
A4	Provides evidence of having completed an essential travel medicine training programme (See Appendix C)			
A5	Awareness of legal framework for the administration of medicines within the consultation with particular regard to PGDs, PSDs, use of unlicensed and off-label drugs			
A6	Awareness of the need to apply confidentiality, completeness of contemporaneous records, obtaining traveller consent and retention of records according to local laws			

Competency Assessment Tool for Travel Health Practitioners				
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE	Not applicable to current role	Self-reflection Record: Met (M)	Supervising practitioner	Action plan As agreed with
• Each competency statement should				

# Water...





Water dangers? sharks, riptides, e-coli, waves, alcohol, cold shock....



# Water safety:

- **Always seek local knowledge** –
- Look for safety notices
- ‘Blue flag’ beaches – understand system
- Lifeguards
- Never swim alone
- Pay attention!
- Know how to float
- Always keep children under supervision
- [Water Safety on Holiday | Royal Life Saving Society UK \(RLSS UK\)](#)
- Water quality checkers - UK surfers against sewage!



# Summary:

- Comprehensive RA underpins an effective consultation
- Individualised - prioritise most significant risks for that traveller on that trip.
- High quality, online, real time resources to assist us
- Use guidance and assessment documents
- Utilise time pre & post clinic consultation to educate the traveller
- Share what you've learned with colleagues – case studies, peer review consultations
- We advise, educate & guide to help travellers ultimately decide for themselves.

# Know your risks....

- Exposure and susceptibility to hazards may vary greatly from one traveller to the next
- **“Forewarned is forearmed” – to be prepared is half the victory”!**

(Ref Miguel de Cervantes, 16<sup>th</sup> Century)



# References: UK resources for travel advice

- 1) **RCN Travel Health Nursing – career and competence development :**  
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/rcn-travel-health-nursing-uk-pub-010-573>
- 2) **Good Practice guidance for providing a travel health service -**  
<https://rcpsg.ac.uk/travel-medicine/good-practice-guidance-for-providing-a-travel-health-service>
- 3) NaTHNaC: (England) [www.Travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.Travelhealthpro.org.uk)
- 4) Travax: (Scotland) [www.Fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.Fitfortravel.nhs.uk)
- 5) FCDO: [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)
- 6) ‘ The Green Book’:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>
- 7) [www.Janechiodini.co.uk](http://www.Janechiodini.co.uk) - useful tools

**ALWAYS CHECK YOUR OWN NATIONAL GUIDANCE**



Any questions?

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