



The Society of Homœopaths
Representing Professional Homœopaths

Homœopathy and Foreign Travel

An information leaflet for world travellers



Homœopathy and Foreign Travel

More than 30 million journeys are made abroad each year. They can vary from a day trip to Paris, requiring no particular health safeguards, to a long expedition in remote mountains needing much forward planning. In these days of fast jet travel, our bodies can be suddenly subjected to conditions they have never encountered before and to which there has been no opportunity to develop immunity.

Health Risks And How To Avoid Them

Each journey and each traveller pose a fresh set of circumstances; there are many variables to consider. By reading further about the country you intend to visit you can prepare yourself beforehand and take precautions.

Water: If you have any doubts about the quality of the tap water, boil it or sterilise it with disinfectant tablets or use bottled water from a sealed container for drinking, brushing teeth or washing food. Check that ice has been prepared from safe water.

Food: If the water is suspect, do not eat salads or fruit unless you can peel it yourself. Check that cooked food has been thoroughly heated through.

Insect Bites: Mosquitoes may spread several diseases, not only malaria but Japanese B encephalitis for example. It is well worth checking the likely risk in the country you are visiting. At high altitude, and in cold conditions they will not be a problem, and many cities are safe. In endemic areas, take care between dusk and dawn, the feeding time for these insects, by applying insect repellents, wearing clothing

that is tight at wrist and ankle, and using a well-fitting mosquito net during sleep. Increasing resistance to anti-malarial drugs is a major problem, particularly in some parts of Africa, so even if you are taking the medication it is still most important to take steps to avoid bites.

Sun: The nearer the equator, the stronger the sun will be. Using sun umbrellas, protective creams and wide brimmed hats, and avoiding exposure during the hours around midday when the sun is hottest will help to prevent not only sunburn but sunstroke, heatstroke, and susceptibility to malignant skin disease in later life.

Remember: Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Homœopathic Remedies

The majority of illnesses contracted abroad are simple ones such as diarrhoea, and chest infections, rather than the ones for which there are specific vaccines. If you already consult a homœopath, he or she knows your medical history and your ability to care for yourself and your family using homœopathic remedies, and will be in a good position to give you further advice for your travels and make suggestions for a specific first aid kit. If you are new to homœopathy, our leaflet *Homœopathy Simply Explained* will be helpful and suggests introductory reading.

Homœopathic remedies may lose their effectiveness if they are exposed to airport x-ray machines. You can protect them by using a lightweight lead lined bag of the type sold for photographic films, or carrying them in your pocket.

Vaccinations

With the exception of Yellow Fever vaccination, which is an essential requirement for certain countries, vaccinations are not compulsory - it is up to you to decide what is appropriate for your circumstances. An aid worker going to a refugee camp in Africa for three months is more likely to require a rabies vaccination than a businessman spending three days in a well appointed hotel in the capital city. It has been estimated that the great majority of travellers' illnesses are not preventable by vaccines - they are more likely to be avoided by adopting the types of measures outlined above, and by maintaining high standards of personal hygiene. Some vaccines are more effective than others - cholera vaccine gives very little protection, and is no longer recommended. Both the short and longer term side effects of each vaccine need to be considered in making your decisions .

If you prefer to have the recommended vaccinations, it is important to start the course well before travelling, and space the injections out so that your immune system has had a chance to recover before you go. Some travellers prefer to make sure that they are in good health before departure by ensuring a good diet, and plenty of exercise, and having constitutional homœopathic treatment where appropriate.

Homœopathic Alternatives

Certain homœopathic remedies are prepared in great dilution from tissues infected with a particular bacterium or virus. Termed nosodes, they have been used in some cases to help prevent infection eg Cholera nosode. Alternatively, a remedy may be used preventively which would be used to treat the illness in question eg China for malaria. Whilst the value of homœopathic remedies in

the **treatment** of disease is well established, their value in the **prevention** of specific disease is not well documented. More research needs to be done to check that travellers who have found them to be effective have actually been exposed to the particular disease.

More Detailed Information

Listed below are books, booklets and telephone services to help you find out more information. You may also wish to consult your general practitioner or local travel clinic as well as your homœopath.

Health Advice for Travellers

Department of Health

To obtain a free copy of this booklet, phone the Health Literature Line on 0800 555 777 at any time, free of charge.

As well as giving information on avoiding health risks and obtaining emergency medical treatment abroad, this leaflet differentiates between the recommended and mandatory vaccinations for each country.

Health Information for Overseas Travel

Department of Health

HMSO 1995 ISBN 0 11 321833 8

(issued to general practitioners)

Gives full information on vaccination schedules and disease risks for each country.

Medical Advisory Services for Travellers

Abroad (MASTA) Tel: 0891 224100

In response to your phone call describing the countries you are visiting, the time of year and the type of accommodation, a computer printout validated by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is posted which lists recommended vaccinations and other precautions.

Calls cost a maximum of 49p per minute.

More Detailed Information (cont)

The Traveller's Guide to Homœopathy

Phyllis Speight

C W Daniel 1989 ISBN 0 85207 212 0

A slim volume to slip in your suitcase, describing the use of first aid remedies.

The World Traveller's Guide to Homœopathy

Dr Colin Lessell

C W Daniel 1993 ISBN 0 85207 242 2

A comprehensive guide for the more adventurous traveller - covers prevention and homœopathic prophylaxis as well as the identification and homœopathic treatment of conditions as diverse as frostbite and tropical sprue.

Handbook of Homœopathic Alternatives to Immunisations

Susan Curtis

Winter Press 1994 ISBN 1 874581 02 9

Describes the symptoms, and homœopathic prophylaxis and treatment of 14 infectious diseases, including cholera, influenza and whooping cough.

Homœopathic First Aid Kits

Many homœopathic pharmacies prepare their own kits, together with instruction leaflets. These two pharmacies offer a mail-order service:

Helios Homœopathic Pharmacy

97 Camden Road
Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2QR
Tel: 01892 536393/537254

Ainsworths Homœopathic Pharmacy

36 New Cavendish Street
London W1M 7LH
Tel: 0171 935 5330