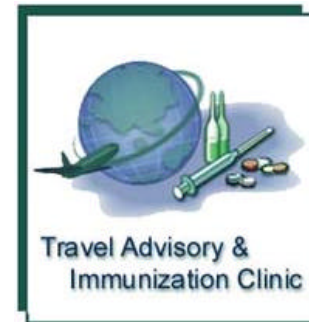


Going Places? Check Immunization Requirements Before International Travel

by Dr. Myra Strother, Chief of Staff,
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If you are getting ready to travel south of the border or to another continent, to avoid last minute problems, be certain you have the required immunizations a couple of months in advance of traveling. Even short trips to Mexico require certain immunizations.

Routine immunizations to consider include hepatitis B, influenza vaccine, MMR (measles-mumps-rubella), and tetanus/diphtheria. Special immunizations include Hepatitis A, plague vaccine, rabies vaccine, and typhoid vaccine. Other problems to consider are malaria, yellow fever, and cholera.

The primary health problems with international travel depend upon the climate of your destination (temperature and humidity), as well as the level of development of the area. This pertains to safe drinking water and a well-developed sanitation system. Areas of the world where raw sewage contaminates drinking water have an extremely high risk of infection affecting the gastrointestinal tract and the liver. Parasites and bacterial diarrhea can be a significant problem if not treated promptly and properly.

A special service at Watkins for KU students traveling abroad is the Travel Care Clinic headed by Dr. Patricia Denning. Students planning international travel should call for an appointment at **(785) 864-9507**. When making an appointment, tell us which countries you will be visiting.

A computer printout will be prepared at no cost listing the immunizations required to enter a country, recommended immunizations for disease prevention, and several pages of key information regarding important telephone numbers in the event of legal or medical problems, locations of embassies, and crime/terrorist information.

The most common immunization required for underdeveloped countries is hepatitis A which takes a minimum of two weeks to become effective. Other vaccinations involve a series of injections taking several weeks to complete.

To be certain that you'll be "going places," it's important to plan accordingly in consideration of your departure date. Failure to have the required immunizations could prevent you from entering another country or leave you vulnerable to life-threatening illnesses. And you definitely don't want to go there!