

Health Tips for the Traveler (Part 2) *By Paul Edgecomb, MD*

Last month, I discussed the common diseases – Traveler’s Diarrhea, Tetanus, MMR, Influenza. This time, let’s investigate the tropical diseases. Once again, I recommend reviewing the web-site run by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/travel; it is very helpful in determining which vaccines you need.

Hepatitis A: Important for many tropical countries; Hepatitis A is spread by contaminated food and water. You can get one dose (an injected vaccine) prior to traveling for temporary immunity. A second dose taken six months later provides life-long immunity.

Typhoid: Important for SOME tropical countries; there’s an oral vaccine that most people prefer, which gives five years of immunity.

Yellow Fever: Important for SOME tropical countries; it’s even REQUIRED by some. This vaccine is more difficult to

get, since there’s a special license required to give it. The yellow fever vaccine can be obtained at the Maricopa County Department of Health, most travel clinics and a few licensed Safeway pharmacies.

Malaria: This is the most complicated disease to prevent as many tropical countries have a malaria risk but it differs depending on the specific part of the country as well as the time of year. There is no vaccine, but there are oral medications that reduce the risk of getting Malaria. There are many different types of Malaria which varies the preventive treatment from country to country. The medications need to be started before you leave for your trip and taken during the entire stay in Malaria-prone areas, and for several days after. When traveling abroad, it’s very important to do your research. Guard against the avoidable diseases and enjoy your trip.

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How do promising new treatments get to the market? Careful scientific research is performed in controlled settings to determine their effectiveness through clinical trials. In the coming months, Thunderbird Internal Medicine will offer clinical research studies to the public as part of our services. In partnership with Clinical Research Advantage, we will conduct clinical trial research and move that segment of our practice to 5620 W. Thunderbird Road, Building G in Glendale. By offering these clinical studies, our patients and the

community have the opportunity to access new research treatments before they are widely available to the public and help others by contributing to medical science. In addition, participants may also receive tests and study medication at no cost.

Clinical trials are studies in strictly controlled scientific settings and are required by the FDA for new drugs and treatments. To learn more or to register, visit www.thunderbirdim.com/research.

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Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale
5620 W. Thunderbird Rd #C-1 & #F-1
Glendale, Arizona 85306

Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Estrella
9150 W. Indian School Rd #118
Phoenix, Arizona 85037