



Nepal

The following information must be viewed as a guide only. It is not intended, nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Specific recommendations on vaccinations, antimalarial medications and targeted travel health advice is always provided on an individual basis taking into account:

- the personal health of the traveller including past medical and vaccination history;
- intended activities;
- precise itinerary;
- style of travel;
- type of accommodation;
- time of year;
- altitude;
- length of stay.

As well, some vaccines eg rabies and tuberculosis are very much influenced by local disease risk. Specific face-to-face advice is particularly important when recommending antimalarial medications and those for presumptive treatment eg for travellers diarrhoea.

We strongly recommend travellers seek an appointment with a doctor trained in travel health prior to departure.

Medical and nursing staff at Travel Doctor-TMVC are trained in international public health issues with a focus on immunisations and preventive medicine. Many have travelled extensively and a number have worked in less developed areas of the world for extended periods. Travellers should undergo individual risk assessments whether they are short term holiday makers, business people or the long term expatriate worker. The Travel Doctor-TMVC has clinics Australia wide. In Australia the local centre may be contacted on 1300 658 844, or by visiting www.traveldoctor.com.au. It is recommended that you visit a travel health professional 6-8 weeks prior to departure. However, if that time frame is not possible, remember – “It’s never too late to vaccinate”.

Healthy Travelling in Nepal

Nepal is with a popular destination for adventurous Australian travellers. The country, though small offers a variety of attractions from elephant rides and encounters with tigers in the Royal Chitwan National Park, a variety of rafting trips, through trekking in the foothills of Everest or the Annapurna Circuit, to serious high-altitude climbing. It really offers something for everyone.

Pre-travel preparation will help protect your health while you are away. To assist you in recognising and understanding some of the major travel health risks you may face while holidaying in Nepal, the Travel Doctor-TMVC has prepared a summary of some of these issues in the following pages. **Table 1** provides a brief description of some of the major travel health issues and vaccinations that should be considered for travel to Nepal.

Table 2 provides a summary of these major travel health issues and preventative measures that should be considered.

We hope you find this information useful in preparing for your trip. Remember it is advisable to consult a travel health specialist prior to departure.

Currency of your basic immunisations such as Tetanus and Diphtheria should be checked and others like Hepatitis A and Typhoid considered according to the criteria mentioned previously.



Table 1. Major Travel Health Issues & Considerations for Nepal

Hepatitis A	This is a viral disease of the liver which is transmitted through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. It is the most common vaccine preventable disease that occurs in travellers to less developed areas of the world. It is strongly recommended for travel to Nepal.
Hepatitis B	This is a viral disease of the liver that is transmitted via blood, blood products or bodily fluids. It is vaccine preventable. Hepatitis B immunisation is now part of the childhood immunisation schedule. Many adult travellers have missed this very important immunisation and travel may be a good reason for vaccination.
Typhoid	Typhoid Fever is caused by a bacteria found in contaminated food & water. It is endemic in the developing world and vaccination is recommended for travellers to areas where environmental sanitation and personal hygiene may be poor. The adventurous eater venturing 'off the beaten' path should certainly consider vaccination.
Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria	Tetanus is caused by a toxin released by a common dust or soil bacteria, which enters the body through a wound. Diphtheria is a bacterial infection of the throat and occasionally of the skin. It is found world wide and is transmitted from person-to-person by coughing and sneezing. Pertussis (Whooping cough) is a highly infectious respiratory infection responsible for 300,000 deaths annually, mainly in children. Diphtheria and pertussis vaccines can be added to the tetanus vaccine. Because many adults no longer have immunity from childhood immunisation it is advised that travellers to less developed countries have a tetanus ,diphtheria and pertussis booster.
Measles, Mumps & Rubella	Childhood immunisation coverage in many developing countries is not very good. As such, travellers whose birth date is after 1966 should check they have had 2 doses of measles vaccine. Since 1990 this may have been as the combination vaccine MMR (measles, mumps and rubella). Those born prior to 1966 are most likely to have long term immunity from previous exposure as a child.
Chickenpox	This very common infectious disease can now be prevented through immunisation. Many people miss the disease in childhood only to have a significant illness as an adult. Travel puts one at higher exposure and if one cannot elicit a history of having had the illness a test can show whether at risk.
Influenza	Individuals intending to travel out of an Australian winter might consider the current flu vaccine at the beginning of the season. Exposure to illness in airports and commuter transport is common and exposure may ruin a much needed break. In fact, influenza is likely to be the commonest vaccine preventable disease faced by travellers.
Poliomyelitis	All travellers to Nepal should be up to date with vaccination against polio. Poliomyelitis is a viral infection that can lead to paralysis and sometimes death. Transmission is by faecal contamination of food, usually by unhygienic food handlers or flies, or directly from infected nasal secretions. Polio is no longer endemic in Nepal, but imported cases from India do occur. Although most Australian's & New Zealanders will have been immunised in childhood, it is important to note that efficacy wanes after 10 years & a booster dose is recommended if travelling to a country where the disease can still be found.
Malaria	Malaria is transmitted by a night biting mosquito. The decision to use or not use anti-malarial drugs should be made after consultation with a travel health specialist, taking into consideration the relative malaria risk of areas on the traveller's itinerary as well as potential side effects and cost of available drugs. Insect avoidance measures should be followed throughout the trip. Upon return, any flu like illnesses should be investigated by a travel health specialist.
Meningitis	Meningitis is an inflammation of the membrane overlaying the brain. It can be caused by bacteria, a virus or a fungus. Bacterial meningitis is the form of most concern to travellers. It is a serious disease & can rapidly become life threatening. It is transmitted from person-to-person through close contact (ie droplet infection – the same way you catch a cold). Vaccination might be considered for those backpacking off the beaten path or those working in health areas where crowded conditions occur. The tea house accommodation in most of the treks in Nepal is conducive to the spread of meningitis and epidemics occur sporadically.
Japanese Encephalitis (JE)	JE is a mosquito borne viral disease prevalent in rural areas of Asia that can lead to serious brain infection in humans. Risk is usually greatest during the monsoon months. A vaccine is available & is particularly recommended for adults & children over 12 months of age who will be spending a month or more in rice growing areas of countries at risk (or who repeatedly visit such areas). It is also recommended for people travelling to an area where an outbreak is known to be occurring. Insect avoidance should be considered the primary means of defence. The risk is higher in the southern lowlands bordering India (Terrai).
Rabies	Rabies is a deadly viral infection of the brain transmitted to humans. The disease itself is rare in travellers, but the risk increases with extended travel and the likelihood of animal contact. The best way to avoid rabies is to avoid all contact with animals. Dogs are the main carriers; however monkeys, bats, cats and other animals may also transmit the disease. Pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for extended travel and those who work with, or are likely to come in contact with animals.

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Cholera	Cholera is a severe, infectious diarrhoeal disease caused by a bacteria. It is common in developing countries & is associated with conditions of poverty & poor sanitation. Cholera causes severe & rapid dehydration. Travellers who follow the rules of eating & drinking safely will minimise their risk. There is also a new oral vaccine available for cholera which may be recommended under certain circumstances.
Traveller's Diarrhoea	Up to 40% of tourists may develop 3 or more loose bowel motions a day within the first week of travel. A variety of germs can be responsible for this infection & a Traveller's Medical Kit containing appropriate therapy can rapidly improve the symptoms. It is also important to follow the rules of healthy eating & drinking to minimise risks.

Table 2. Summary of travel health issues for Nepal & preventative options available

	Vaccine Available	Healthy Eating & Drinking	Insect Avoidance	Animal Avoidance
Hepatitis A	✓	✓		
Hepatitis B	✓			
Typhoid	✓	✓		
Tetanus, Pertussis & Diphtheria	✓			
Measles, Mumps & Rubella	✓			
Chickenpox	✓			
Influenza	✓			
Polio	✓			
Malaria			✓	
Meningitis	✓			
Japanese Encephalitis	✓		✓	
Rabies	✓			✓
Cholera	✓	✓		
Traveller's Diarrhoea		✓		

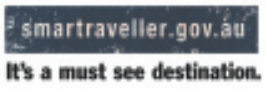
✓ indicates preventative considerations

Malaria is a risk factor in Nepal. There is year long risk in the Terai region bordering India, including the Royal Chitwan National Park. No risk exists in Khatmandu or typical highland treks. Malaria prevention options should be discussed with a travel medicine specialist prior to departure.

Air Pollution is a major problem in Khatmandu as a result of numerous brick kilns, vehicular exhausts and the city's position between the Himalayan range to the north and the Mahabharat range in the south preventing air flow. Travellers with pulmonary disease need to exercise care.

Yellow Fever vaccination may be required for all travellers arriving from or transiting through Yellow Fever infected areas, such as Africa or the Americas.

Additional fact sheets can be found at <http://www.traveldoctor.com.au>



Remember to check the DFAT 'Smartraveller' website www.smartraveller.gov.au prior to departure



...for a safe and healthy journey

Travel Health Fact Sheet **Nepal**

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