



Hart voor Brabant

Fit for travel

How to travel well-prepared

The “travel bug” is harmless


Globetrotting, getting to know different cultures and people can be quite inspiring. However, travelling far-away can also be hazardous to your health. In many countries, hygienic standards and sanitary facilities leave much to be desired. This means you run more risk of contracting an infectious disease. Travelling to distant places and enjoying a pleasant holiday require proper preparation. Needless to say that you wish to return home in good health as well. Keeping that in mind, there are a number of precautions you can take before, during and after your trip to minimize the chances of illness. The GGD (Municipal Health Service) will be glad to assist you. This leaflet contains information about the most common diseases and health issues. It also provides useful instructions how you can safeguard yourself. Extensive information is available during GGD special consulting hours for travellers.

We wish you a healthy journey!

Consulting hours

After a personal consultation at the GGD, you will receive a tailor-made recommendation. You can make an appointment by calling our planning department “Reizigerszorg” (Health Care Travellers) or through the Internet. Please see to it that this appointment is set 4 to 5 weeks prior to your departure. In this way, there will be sufficient time to administer the best possible protection (for contact particulars: see back cover of this leaflet).





You will first receive a confirmation and a questionnaire on the subject of your health. During the consultation itself, we will discuss your destination, the duration of your stay, your means of travel, health and age. Based on these particulars, we will give you our recommendations, determinate your vaccination programme and inoculate you accordingly. Also, you will receive information on hygiene and sensible practice. If necessary, we will write out a malaria-prescription for you. The GGD additionally offers a range of precautionary products, such as insect repellent, mosquito nets and O.R.S.

Last-minute trips

Will you be leaving shortly or do you have to travel unexpectedly? It is never too late to get your vaccinations. The majority of vaccines offer immediate protection, as do most malaria-tablets.

Vaccinations

Diphtheria, tetanus and polio (DTP)

Make sure that you are adequately protected against DTP. Most people born in the Netherlands after 1950 have been inoculated as a child. In

that case, you will get a so-called repeat vaccination. Have you never been inoculated against DTP at all, or perhaps inadequately? If so, we advise you to arrange for two vaccinations prior to your trip.

Yellow Fever

Yellow fever is a serious tropical disease which is common in tropical Africa and South America. The virus involved is transmitted by mosquitoes. The only way you can protect yourself is by vaccination. In some countries, vaccination against this disease is compulsory.

Hepatitis A (contagious jaundice)

This is a highly contagious viral infection of the liver. The virus is secreted through defecation. You can become infected by contaminated water or food, but also by tainted objects such as the door knob of a lavatory. Hepatitis A is common in many countries in the (sub)tropics. It can also be found in less remote countries such as those surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Therefore, it is wise to apply for vaccination. Individuals who have suffered contagious



jaundice in the past, will have acquired antibodies by nature. This can be checked by means of a blood test.

Hepatitis B

You can become infected with Hepatitis B through contaminated blood or objects which have been in contact with blood, such as hypodermic needles or razor blades. Sexual interaction, however, can also cause this infection. The type and or duration of your journey could be a reason for recommending vaccination.

Hepatitis A+B

There is a twinrix vaccination which protects against both Hepatitis A and B.

Typhoid

Typhoid is a serious infectious disease which is passed on by bacteria in food and drinking water. The infection starts in the intestines. After that, other organs can become inflamed as well. Maintaining good hygiene with regard to food and drinking water is essential. Besides this, you can protect yourself through vaccination.

Long journeys

Will you be travelling for more than a few weeks? Or do you frequently make short trips, e.g. for business? If so, you are more susceptible to contracting certain infectious diseases. The GGD can provide you with information on the importance of extra precautions. These will depend on the duration, destination and purpose of your trip. You could be advised to apply for vaccinations against diseases such as Früh Sommer Meningo Encephalitis (Tick Borne Encephalitis), Japanese Encephalitis, Meningococcal Disease (Meningitis), Rabies or Tuberculosis. It could also be wise to take extra medication against malaria and other infectious diseases.

Precautions against malaria

Malaria is a tropical disease which is transmitted by mosquitoes. Each country has its own recommendations with respect to malaria. An adequate recommendation is extremely

important as malaria can be life-threatening.

You can protect yourself by:

- Taking anti-malaria tablets.
 - Preventing mosquito bites.
1. Applying repellent to exposed skin; this repellent should contain sufficient DEET.
 2. Sleeping in a mosquito-free room or under a mosquito net.
 3. If you go outdoors after sunset, cover your body with the proper clothing such as trousers, socks and long-sleeved shirt.



STD and conditions transmitted by blood contact

There is no need to be secretive about this. Many people who travel abroad have sexual contacts with someone they meet locally, be it a resident or another traveller. In many parts of the world, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS are more common than in the Netherlands. The chances that you might contract an STD or the AIDS-virus (HIV) are thus considerably higher.

What can you do?

- Before your departure, buy reliable condoms in the Netherlands; these are not always available in other countries.
- Avoid any contact with blood(products) and sharp objects (getting a tattoo, an ear or body piercing, acupuncture treatment). Especially if you are not certain that the procedure will be carried out in a



hygienic and sterile manner.

- Do you think you might not be able to find proper medical facilities during your trip? In this case, consider taking along some sterile syringes and needles yourself. The GGD can provide you with more relevant information.

Pregnancy

Are you expecting a baby? During pregnancy, your physical resistance is lower than normal. This means the risk of contracting an infectious disease is above average. Moreover, such a disease can progress more seriously. Your unborn child will also be at greater risk. Therefore, if you are expecting or hope to become pregnant soon, please seek relevant advice from the GGD about travelling risks.



Preventing travellers' diarrhoea

Many travellers to (sub)tropic regions are liable to diarrhoea. This is caused by pathogenic bacteria and viruses in food and drinking water. What can you do yourself to prevent diarrhoea?

- Do not consume tap water, ice cubes or unpackaged ice-cream.
- Do not eat raw products.
- Peel your fruit yourself.
- Only eat food that has been thoroughly heated.
- Take into account that food spoils more rapidly.
- Wash your hands after using the lavatory and before meals, use a clean towel.

Boil it, cook it, peel it ... or forget it!

Prevent dehydration

Even if you take good precautions, you will remain liable to acute diarrhoea. In general, this condition is relatively mild and will last no more than three to five days. Make sure, however, that



you do not dehydrate. To prevent this, you can take O.R.S. (Oral Rehydration Salts). This medication fills the deficit of salts and water which are lost due to diarrhoea. Besides this, it is wise to pack an astringent before departure.

To stay healthy, good hygiene is crucial, especially with regard to food and drinking water. Moreover, keeping good hygiene can shield you from more serious intestinal infections such as dysentery and salmonella.

Travellers' medicine kit

It is very inconvenient to discover that medication or domestic remedies which you use at home, are not available abroad. Therefore, it is important to anticipate what you should take along yourself. A folder on this subject is available at the GGD. Do you take medication? If so, pack a sufficient quantity to last the duration of your trip. Ask your pharmacist for a so-called medication passport.

Protection against sun exposure

Sunshine also has a downside to it. This is why you should dispose of protective clothing, a good pair of sunglasses,

sunscreen with a high-protective factor and lip balsam.

Queries during or after your trip

Do you have a health-related question or do you need our advice whilst travelling? If so, you can contact us by e-mail at: reizigerszorg@ggdhvb.nl We will answer your queries as soon as possible (during Dutch office hours), at the latest within two working days.

Returning home in good health

Certain infectious diseases do not manifest themselves until a few weeks later. By that time you might already be back in the Netherlands. Are you experiencing physical ailments? If this is the case, contact your general practitioner or the GGD. Be sure to mention your recent stay abroad. If you suffer from fever attacks or diarrhoea, lasting for more than a few days, you should be particularly alert. Initially, your GP will examine and treat you.



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Colophon

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How to make an appointment?

Call: 0900-vaccins

or 0900-822 24 67 (€ 0,10 p/m)

Or make your appointment online:

www.ggdreizigerszorg.nl

Postal address

GGD Hart voor Brabant

Postbus 3166

5203 DD 's-Hertogenbosch

Visiting addresses

Vogelstraat 2

5212 VL 's-Hertogenbosch

Liduinahof 35

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5037 PC Tilburg

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5342 BR Oss

