



Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is one of the most prevalent viruses worldwide and can cause chronic liver disease and liver cancer.

How is Hepatitis B spread?

The virus can be found in bodily fluids and is transmitted by close sexual contact or through the skin, such as contaminated medical or dental instruments and transfusion of infected blood products. Sexual transmission is a particularly high risk amongst men who have sex with men.

How can you avoid Hepatitis B?

The risk of Hepatitis B is considered to be low in travellers. However, this risk will increase if you put yourself in situations such as unprotected sexual intercourse, having body piercing, tattoos or acupuncture. Being involved in accidents may lead to you having to have blood products or surgery.

Vaccine recommendations:

The vaccine is given as a course of three injections. Vaccination should be considered if you think you may be at risk. This applies especially to travellers who:

- may be exposed to blood and blood products, ie healthcare professionals, working the local population
- intend to stay for long periods in high prevalence areas
- are considered to be at risk through planned activities, ie volunteers undertaking manual work, contact sports, casual sex
- have long term medical conditions that may require medical/surgical procedures abroad