Role of the Public Health Agency of Canada in Providing Border and Travel Health Advice

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Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Jennifer Geduld, Office of Border and Travel Health, Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Public Health Agency of Canada
  - has no conflict of interest to declare related to the presentation:
    - Role of the Public Health Agency of Canada in Providing Travel Health Advice
Objectives

This presentation will allow participants to gain a perspective on:

• the role of Border and Travel Health program
• the development process of travel health information for public and health care professionals
• Role of the Committee to Advice on Tropical Medicine and Travel (CATMAT) in providing travel health related advice for health care professionals
PHAC Travel health activities

• Risk assessment and epidemiologic support to PHAC border and travel health activities
• Secretariat and epidemiologic support for CATMAT.
• Develop travel health information and recommendations for the travelling public and health care professional
• Enhance travel, tropical and border health data available in Canada
• Knowledge translation and outreach
PHAC Travel health activities

• Designate quarantine, screening and environmental health officers
• Designate Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres
• At borders, screen and assess travellers and undertake public health measures
• On passenger conveyances and ancillary services
  – Conduct food, water and sanitation inspection and audits
  – Implement risk-based activities including verifying compliances with Food and Drugs Act and new modernized potable water regulations.
Monitoring health risks to Canadian travellers

- Daily/weekly monitoring of data about new, unusual or rapidly evolving health risks relevant to Canadian travellers
- Evidence from reputable/validated information sources:
  - Official country reports, WHO or regional office reports (PAHO), ECDC, IHR notifications.
  - Data from various internal and external partners
    - National Microbiology Laboratory, Provincial and territorial partners, Notifiable Disease data
  - Work with PHAC subject matter experts
Data verification and validation

• If reputable sources are insufficient or there is uncertainty
  – Seek and provide information from Consular Affairs, Global Affairs Canada
  – National IHR focal point requests information and clarification from PAHO on issues of uncertainty or specific country requests
  – Engage with our International partners (ie. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health England, United Kingdom’s National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC))
  – Seek information from other data sources such as Statistics Canada, sentinel network CanTravNet/GeoSentinel etc.
Travel health risk assessment framework

• Consistent and systematic approach to support/inform decision making
  – Is there a health risk to Canadians travelling or living abroad?
  – If so, what is the level of health risk?
  – Should we be sharing information with the public and/or health care professional?
  – What do we recommend for public/health care professionals?
  – Do we need to develop additional recommendations?
  – What mechanism should we use to share this information?
  – Will there be a requirement for other measures
    • implementation of border measures either through quarantine
    • inspections of conveyances
Mechanisms for sharing information/recommendation

• Government of Canada website: travel.gc.ca
  – Travel health notices, country level recommendation, disease and specific fact sheets
  – Social media
  – Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) via Global Affairs Canada

• Canadian Network of Public Health Information (CNPHI)

• Emails distributions:
  – Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres
  – CanTravNet Network Members program

• CATMAT publications

• Canada Communicable Disease Report
Should we post a Travel Health Notice?

- Outside of Canada?
- Event is unusual or unexpected?
- Current, emerging or changing patterns of disease or illness?
- Impact on the health of travellers?
- Coordination with safety and security levels of Global Affairs Canada

Level 1: Practise usual health precautions
Level 2: Practise enhanced health precautions
Level 3: Avoid non-essential travel
Level 4: Avoid all travel
Level 1: Practise usual or routine health precautions

- **routine or ‘usual’ baseline risk** or slightly higher risk with limited impact to the traveller
- Would it benefit the traveller to remind them to follow **usual** precautions for a destination or group of destinations?
- Reinforcing information already available on travel.gc.ca?
  - Mass gathering event (i.e. Hajj or Olympics)
  - An environmental event that may impact health (i.e. typhoon or earthquake)
  - Event has generated public concern measured by public, stakeholders or media inquiries
  - There have been sporadic cases or health issues within a particular geographic location
  - Known or unknown disease/infection/organism in the region.
  - It is peak travel season or a frequent destination for travellers from Canada
Level 2: Practise enhanced health precautions

- Follow **enhanced** health precautions above the usual precautions recommended for the destination.
- Increased in certain regions or associated with certain groups or risk factors.
- There is a change to the existing disease pattern, distribution or epidemiology of a disease
- The disease pattern is unusual or unexpected
- There is a large scale outbreak or large number of cases
- There is a newly identified mode of transmission
- Enhanced precautions recommended for travel to the region
- Enhanced precautions may reduce the risk to travellers
Level 3 & 4 – Avoid non-essential/avoid travel

- **high to very high risk** to travellers
- High mortality and/or morbidity among travellers or endemic population.
- High risk of disease transmission.
- Limited diagnostic measures and effective treatments before progression to severe disease.
- Spread of disease will possibly negatively impact trade and/or environment in Canada.
- WHO recommends travel restrictions.
- Precautionary measures are of limited value in reducing transmission
- Limiting travel from Canada will significantly limit the spread of the disease both in Canada and internationally.
- Other countries or regions are implementing quarantine measures for travellers arriving from the region OR recommending avoiding non-essential travel.
- There is limited availability of timely access to appropriate health care in the affected region.
Committee to Advise on Tropical Medicine and Travel

- An external advisory body reporting to PHAC.
- Established in 1989 to address the ongoing need in Canada for guidelines on travel medicine and travel health.
- Uniquely positioned to assist PHAC with specific travel-health related advice
- The scope of activities include:
  - the development of recommendations relating to the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases and other health hazards that may be encountered by Canadian travellers outside of Canada.
Who makes up CATMAT’s membership?

- Core members (10 voting members)

- Ex-Officio representatives from various government organizations
  - Health Canada, Department of National Defence, US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and others as required

- Liaison representatives:
  - NGO, agencies, societies and groups such as the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Association of Medical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases, and others as required.

- Secretariat
Secretariat Support

• Executive secretary
  – liaison between PHAC and CATMAT

• Epidemiologists
  – epidemiological support on the literature search and review and synthesis of evidence
  – use of Health Portfolio Library Services

• Secretariat manager and project assistant
  – logistic coordination, translation and publication/web posting, meeting planning.
What kind of recommendations does CATMAT develop?

• Three types of recommendations statements
  – travel related-related vaccine-preventable diseases
    • yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis
  – travel-related non-vaccine preventable conditions
    • travellers’ diarrhea, dengue, malaria
  – Special populations
    • visiting friends and relatives, pregnant travellers, pediatric traveller

• 30 statements currently available on PHAC’s web site.
• Canadian Immunization Guide (travel)
• National Advisory Committee on Immunization (travel)
How does CATMAT decide what to work on?

• Topics and priorities are decided by PHAC and CATMAT members

• Once a topic is selected:
  – A working group is struck, consisting of interested members and
community members of the secretariat as well as internal experts from PHAC
where relevant.
  – Working groups hold regular teleconferences and e-mail exchanges
to develop the statements and related recommendations.
  – Decision making:
    • Type of statement (new or update)
    • Type of evidence based recommendations
    • Timeline for publication
CATMAT and Evidence Based Medicine

- Methods to develop recommendations has evolved in the past years:
  - a standard methodology and templates to guide authors of CATMAT statements and technical support of the secretariat.
  - Adopted the use of **Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE)** framework as a method
  - Guidelines may include recommendations based on:
    - GRADE
    - A synthesis of evidence, less rigorous (without GRADE)
    - Combination of both
      - selected outcomes in each statement are subject to the rigorous GRADE methodology and the remainder of the statement uses a narrative review approach.
GRADE

- Uses a systematic framework for assessing the quality of the body of evidence and determining the direction and strength of a recommendation
- Emphasizes transparency, and clinically important outcomes.
- The use of GRADE will be based on the judgement of the full committee and the working group.

- Which method to use depend on a number of factors including:
  - the anticipated burden of the disease
  - the seriousness of the outcomes to be prevented
  - the potential benefits and harms of the intervention
  - the quality of the evidence
  - and the resources available to the committee.
Process for developing recommendation statements

• Once decision has been made about recommendations:
  – Literature review, evidence review and evaluation
  – Development of recommendations
  – Statement development
  – Full working group endorsement followed by CATMAT endorsement
  – Approval by CATMAT during process

• CATMAT approval either by in person meeting or via teleconference or by email

• PHAC approval

• Publication process: translation, creative services formatting, web coding.

• Timelines can range from 2 weeks to 2 years
CATMAT’s workplan

CATMAT’s upcoming new or revised statements

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<td>Travel Stresses</td>
<td>2017/2018</td>
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Canadian data on travel, tropical and border health

- **GeoSentinel/CanTravNet**
  - Provider-based surveillance of international travellers and migrants.
  - 60 travel/tropical medicine clinics globally
  - 233 Network Members on all continents
  - CanTravNet: Six Canadian sites from five provinces are large referral-based outpatient centres
  - Select analyses and publication of manuscripts on travel and tropical disease

- **Canadian Malaria Network**
  - Enhance data available on serious malaria cases in Canada

- **Nationally notifiable disease data**

- **Statistics Canada data on international travellers**
### Suite of products providing travel health information and recommendations

#### For the public

- Travel health notices
- Travel health recommendations by destination
- Fact sheets with travel health information
- Location of designated Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres and frequently asked questions
- Social Media (twitter and facebook)
- Conveyance inspections

#### For health care professionals

- Evidence-based clinical health statements on travel-related diseases and conditions:
  - CATMAT recommendation statements
  - Canadian Immunization Guide and National Advisory Committee on Immunization statements
- Information on obtaining and maintaining designation of Yellow Fever Vaccination Centres
Canada.ca Landing Page

#Budget2017 – Tax Fairness for the Middle Class
Travel on Canada.ca

Travel abroad
It is important to be prepared and to expect the unexpected wherever in the world you may be. Here is helpful information on health and safety, travel documents, Canada-U.S border wait times, travelling with children and more.

Follow: Twitter Facebook

- Travel Advice and Advisory
  - Country-specific information on safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements, health conditions and other important travel issues.

- Schengen Area
  - Important information for travellers to Europe.

- Travel health and safety
  - Includes essential information on understanding travel health and safety risks and preventive measures to take before and during your trip.

- Canada to U.S. border wait times
  - Regularly updated list of wait times at border crossing points for drivers going to the U.S. from Canada.

- Travel documents
  - Information on passports, visas, international driving permits and a variety of other documents you will need when you travel outside the country.

- Registration of Canadians Abroad
  - Sign up with the Registration of Canadians Abroad service to stay connected to Canada in case of an emergency abroad or an emergency at home.
Travel Health and Safety
https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety

Travel health and safety
International travellers should always be extra concerned about their health and safety. Here is essential information on travel health risks and preventive measures to keep you and your loved ones safe during your travels.

Follow:  

Travel health notices
The Public Health Agency of Canada’s Travel Health Notices outline potential health risks to Canadian travellers and recommend ways to help reduce them. Notices remain in effect until removed.

Find a travel health clinic
Use this list to find the travel health clinic nearest you. Visit the clinic or your health care provider six weeks before you travel.

Diseases
Travelling abroad can put you at risk of contracting a disease that may not be common in Canada. Read these fact sheets and be prepared.

Insect bite prevention
Many travel-related diseases are transmitted by infected mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, or flies. Make sure you prevent insect bites.

Travel health kit
Carry a basic travel health kit no matter where you travel.

Eating and drink safely
How to avoid food poisoning, the stomach flu and travellers' diarrhea, the most common cause of illness in travellers.

Vaccination
Your health care provider may recommend that you be vaccinated against one or more diseases before you travel abroad.

Travelling with medication
Make sure your medication won't cause you any problems while you're abroad or when you return

Travelling with a medical device
Plan in advance, check with your doctor and avoid problems at airport security screening.

Receiving medical care in other countries
Medical practices, health standards and infection control measures in other countries may differ from those in Canada. Make an informed decision.

Travel insurance
If you travel abroad you need travel insurance, no matter where you’re going or how long you’ll be there.

Sun and heat safety tips for travellers
Strong sunlight and extreme heat are health risks that are often overlooked by Canadian travellers.
List of Travel Health Notices

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Yellow fever in Brazil</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 16, 2017</td>
<td>Zika virus infection: Global Update</td>
<td>Caribbean, Central America and Mexico, South America, Southeast Asia, Ocean Pacific Islands, and limited areas in North America, Central Africa and West Africa</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 24, 2017</td>
<td>Polio : vaccine advice</td>
<td>Afghanistan, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Laos, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 16, 2017</td>
<td>Avian influenza H7N9 in China</td>
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<td>Oct 18, 2016</td>
<td>Rift Valley Fever in Niger</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
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Country page health tab

Brazil

Last updated: March 31, 2017 13:30 ET
Still valid: April 10, 2017 12:47 ET
Latest updates: The Health tab was updated - travel health notices (Public Health Agency of Canada)

Health

Related Travel Health Notices

- Yellow fever in Brazil - March 31, 2017 00:00 EDT
- Zika virus infection: Global Update - March 16, 2017 00:00 EDT
- Chikungunya: Global Update - August 26, 2016 00:00 EDT
- Measles: Global Update - July 28, 2016 00:00 EDT
- Dengue in the Americas - June 16, 2016 00:00 EDT

Consult a health care provider or visit a travel health clinic preferably six weeks before you travel.

- Vaccines
- Food/Water
- Insects
- Malaria
- Animals
- Person-to-Person

Medical services and facilities
Travelhealth.gc.ca or www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/index-eng.php
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<td>Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)</td>
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<td>Hepatitis</td>
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<td>• Appendix 1: Malaria risk and recommended chemotherapy by geographic area – Updated</td>
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<td>• Drugs for the treatment and prevention of malaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arthropod Bites</td>
<td>Statement on Personal Protective Measures to Prevent Arthropod Bites – Update</td>
<td>2012</td>
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Knowledge Translation and Outreach Activities

- Increased readability of format and content of travel health notice
- Social media
- Posters to raise awareness and help prevent potential risks related to Canadian travellers going to Saudi Arabia to attend the Hajj and Umrah.
- Event specific information sheets e.g. Chikungunya, H7N9
- Outreach activities at airport for Zika
- Webinars on new CATMAT statements
ARE YOU TRAVELLING FOR HAJJ OR UMRAH THIS YEAR?

A large number of people attend these spiritual gatherings which can increase your risk of getting sick and/or being injured.

TO STAY HEALTHY DURING HAJJ OR UMRAH:

Consult a health care provider or travel health clinic, preferably six weeks before you travel.

Practice proper cough and sneeze etiquette. Cough or sneeze into your arm, not your hands.

Eat and drink safely. Avoid eating undercooked meat and unpasteurized dairy products such as raw camel milk.

Locate medical facilities. Your risk of accidental injury increases in large crowds.

See a health care provider if you get sick while travelling.

Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water before you feel thirsty.

WHEN YOU RETURN TO CANADA:

See a health care provider if you develop symptoms such as a fever, cough and/or shortness of breath within 14 days after your return and tell them where you have travelled.

Tell a border services officer if you develop symptoms as described above upon arrival into Canada.

For more travel health information: travel.gc.ca

publichealth.gc.ca

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