

Traveller Information Sheets



HIV / AIDS

What does HIV and AIDS stand for?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

How do you get HIV / AIDS?

HIV and AIDS are most commonly transmitted via unprotected sexual intercourse. They can also be transmitted in contaminated blood, bodily fluids, syringes and needles and equipment that is used for tattooing or piercing. Women with HIV can transmit it to their babies during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding.

Can I be vaccinated against HIV / AIDS?

There is no vaccine available to prevent these conditions.

Can I still travel if I have HIV / AIDS?

Some countries have adopted entry and visa restrictions for people with HIV or AIDS. It is strongly advised that these travellers seek expert medical advice prior to departure. Additionally, due to the nature of these two diseases there are some vaccinations that cannot be given to this group of travellers and some vaccines that require specific blood testing. Travellers with HIV / AIDS are strongly encouraged to take out comprehensive travel insurance, in the event that their condition deteriorates and they require specialised medical care or medical evacuation.

How can I avoid coming into contact with HIV / AIDS?

Contact can be prevented by abstinence of casual sex or any form of penetrative sex. Contact can be reduced by correct and consistent use of male / female condoms. Travellers should also avoid sharing needles and / or syringes or tattooing or piercing equipment. Travellers should also be aware that acupuncture equipment, if not properly sterilised could transmit HIV and / or AIDS.

What do I do if I come into contact with another person's blood?

Accidental or intended exposure to potentially infected blood or other bodily fluids is a medical emergency. The following should be started immediately:

1. First aid.
2. Attend for an appointment with medical personnel. Contact your travel insurance company for the details of the closest provider.
3. Ask to start Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) immediately if required.

References:

Shoreland Inc, n.d. *HIV or AIDS-infected – Travellers*, Milwaukee, WI 53213-0795, viewed 7th April 2014, <<https://www.travax.com/scripts/main/topframeset.asp?DocID=medical>>

World Health Organisation, 2014, Geneva Switzerland, Viewed 7th April 2014, <http://www.who.int/ith/other_health_risks/chapter8/en/>