

Info-MADO

Newsletter of the Nunavik Department of Public Health on Notifiable diseases

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TRAVELLER ALERT

Draft by the infectious-diseases team
Nunavik Dept. of Public Health

CALL FOR VIGILANCE

The present call for vigilance is destined principally for front-line physicians and nurses of the Nunavik health and social services network.

The increasing frequency of travel all over the world, whether for work or leisure, raises particular issues for travellers and front-line interveners. Travellers can, in a matter of hours, arrive at destinations where they will be exposed to conditions and pathogens very different from those in their usual environment, often through vectors they do not adequately understand.

Our situation as a northern region does not make us immune! The Nunavik Department of Public Health is of the opinion that reports of cases of tropical diseases could increase in number over the coming years.

Front-line interveners must be alert. They must be able to advise travellers on the appropriate preventive measures before a trip and to respond quickly and appropriately when the symptoms of such diseases appear in a patient after returning from a trip.

Infections such as paludism (malaria), Zika, chikungunya and yellow fever are examples of diseases for which health professionals must be vigilant.

Prevention

Before departing, travellers should learn about health risks and the precautions to take depending on their travel destination. For example, it may be relevant to recommend preventive anti-malaria medication.

Preventive measures such as vaccination, observation of safety rules and use of adequate products for protection against the sun, mosquitoes or contaminated water contribute to a worry-free trip and a healthy return home.

The Department of Public Health recommends consultation at a travel clinic at least two months before departure. Such clinics are not yet currently available in Nunavik, but there are several in the Montréal and Québec City areas.

Return

It's imperative to question all individuals with a fever if they had travelled within the past three months. Other symptoms such as the following may indicate underlying infections:

- muscle or joint pain;
- nausea or vomiting;
- headache;
- sweats or chills.

The first questions during primary evaluation when an individual consults for one of these symptoms remain:

- Did you travel during the past three months?
- If so, where? When? Under what conditions?

A diagnosis for malaria must be eliminated in all individuals who have visited a malaria zone and who have compatible symptoms (spike of high fever, occasional gastrointestinal symptoms, myalgia, chills and sweats, headache, dizziness). Medical consultation with a microbiologist is immediately indicated.

The key to recovery, in most cases, is to obtain appropriate treatment as quickly as possible. Malaria is a potentially fatal disease. Quickly contact the reference medical team for appropriate case management and application of protective and isolation measures as needed.

Resources for Professionals

INSPQ, Guide d'intervention santé-voyage

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sante-voyage/guide>

INSPQ, Actualité santé voyage

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/bulletins/santevoyage/ActualitesSanteVoyage-Vol17No1.pdf>

List of countries subject to specific monitoring for Severe Acute Respiratory Infections

<http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/documents/liste-des-pays-mrsi.pdf>

Epidemiological monitoring

<http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/documents/veille-epidemiologique.pdf>

Committee to Advise on Tropical Medicine and Travel (CATMAT)

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/catmat-ccmtmv/index-eng.php>

Resources for Travellers

Travel Health, Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/index-eng.php>

MSSS, health portal, Protecting Yourself from Mosquito and Tick Bites

<http://www.xn--sant-epa.gouv.qc.ca/en/conseils-et-prevention/se-proteger-des-piqures-de-moustiques/>

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Schedule: Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Infectiologist on duty weekends