

CDC Health Information for International Travel 2008

Edited by Paul M. Arguin, Phyllis E. Kozarsky and Christie Reed*

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Reviewed by Peter A Leggat MD

Travel medicine is an area that needs to be informed by accurate information concerning the epidemiology, management and prevention of disease and injury amongst travellers. It is a discipline that is constantly changing as the patterns of disease and injury evolve. The 2008 Edition of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *CDC Health Information for International Travel*, commonly referred to as the "Yellow Book", satisfies the need for a highly respected international reference source of information on major disease and injury issues relevant to the pre- and post-travel consultation. Many readers will be familiar with the excellent online version of this reference.¹ This 2008 Edition of the *CDC Health Information for International Travel* has a Preface, a list of 93 CDC Contributors, a list of eight External Contributors, Acknowledgments, a table of Contents, a List of Tables (42), a List of Maps (24), nine Chapters, and a comprehensive Index. There is no Foreword. References are given by section. The cover is attractive with a yellow theme, consistent with the "Yellow Book"; however on first glance the photograph chosen for the cover could suggest a diving medicine publication.

Chapters include "Introduction", "Pre- and Post-travel general health recommendations", "Geographic distribution of potential health hazards to travelers", "Prevention of specific infectious diseases", "Yellow fever vaccine requirements and information on malaria risk and prophylaxis, by country (yellow pages)", "Non-infectious risks during travel", "Conveyance and transportation issues", "International travel with infants and young children" and "Advising travellers with specific needs". The *CDC Health Information for International Travel* is easy reading and has an infectious disease focus common to these types of references. Highlights include the excellent structure of each section, maps and the provision of key and further readings. At 249 pages, nearly half of the textbook, the chapter on prevention of specific diseases is one of the most comprehensive of any travel medicine reference book. Other items of interest include the sections on visiting friends and relatives and humanitarian aid workers, as well as the latest on Avian influenza. It may have been useful

to include more discussion on first aid, safety, finding medical assistance abroad, emergency assistance and aeromedical evacuation, and travel insurance.

Little information is given concerning the editors; however they are from the highly respected CDC, US Department of Health and Human Services. Interestingly, although there are 93 listed CDC contributors and eight external contributors and despite *Health Information for International Travel* being used as an international reference, there are no contributors outside North America and only one of the external contributors was from outside the USA.

The *CDC Health Information for International Travel* is an essential reference for all physicians and nurses working full-time or part-time in travel medicine. It would easily fit into the briefcase or desktop library, although it is quite heavy for its size. Its main competitor is the well-known World Health Organization publication, *International Travel and Health*,² now the "blue book", which is a much more compact publication giving only the essential information for travel health advisers and with a website presence as well. The Guide[editor note: it is not clear whether 'The Guide' refers to the CDC publication or the WHO publication, author to clarify] will also appeal as a reference textbook to general practitioners and general practice staff, especially those who are called upon to occasionally provide travel health advice, and other health professionals with an interest in travel medicine. Academic and research departments of travel medicine should also consider the reference as an essential textbook for their libraries and postgraduate courses in travel medicine. This 2008 edition of the *CDC Health Information for International Travel* remains the definitive work in the exclusive international portfolio of standard reference textbooks in travel medicine.

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *CDC Health Information for International Travel 2008*. URL: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> (accessed 15 August 2008).
2. World Health Organization. *International Travel and Health*. Geneva: WHO, 2007. URL: <http://www.who.int/ith> (accessed 15 August 2008)