

Guidance for parents and carers:

Overseas Travel and Risk of Tuberculosis in Children

Key points

- BCG vaccination is recommended for children aged less than 5 years before travelling to a country where there is a high risk of tuberculosis (TB) for 3 months or more. However, supply of BCG vaccine in Australia is currently limited and in some instances it may be difficult to get your child vaccinated prior to travel.
- If you are unable to obtain BCG for your children before you travel, it is recommended that your children have a test when you return to Australia to check whether they may have been exposed to TB. Contact your local TB service to arrange an appointment for free TB screening.
- Whilst overseas and after returning to Australia, watch out for signs and symptoms of TB and seek medical advice early if you or your children have symptoms.

Overseas travel and risk of tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) remains a common disease in many parts of the world. People travelling to high TB risk countries, especially for a prolonged period are at increased risk of being infected with TB through being exposed to people with infectious TB. If infected, young children are at high risk of developing serious forms of the disease, such as TB meningitis.

BCG vaccination is recommended for children aged less than 5 years if travelling to a country where there is a high risk of TB, for 3 months or more. A list of countries where the risk of TB infection is high is provided over the page.

However, supply of BCG vaccine in Australia is currently limited and in some instances it may be difficult to get your child vaccinated prior to travel.

Signs and symptoms of tuberculosis in children

TB infection does not cause any symptoms, however children infected with TB can sometimes quickly become sick with serious TB disease. TB disease can affect any part of the body and symptoms are varied. Common symptoms of TB include fever, tiredness, sweating at night time and weight loss. When TB is in the lungs it can cause cough and chest pain. Children may just have an enlarged lymph node (“gland”), such as around the neck or under the jaw, as the only sign of TB.

Screening for tuberculosis after overseas travel

If you are travelling with children aged less than 5 years to a country with a high risk of TB, and staying there 3 months or more, and you are unable to obtain BCG before you leave, it is recommended that your children have a test to check for TB infection when you return to Australia. If your child has been infected with TB, treatment can be given to prevent them becoming sick with TB disease. TB testing and treatment are provided free of charge in NSW. Contact your local TB service to arrange an appointment.

Contact your local TB service for more information

For more information check the NSW Health website – www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/tuberculosis/ or contact your local TB service (see contact details over page).

Countries with a High Risk of Tuberculosis (A-Z)

Afghanistan	Ecuador	Korea, DPR	Nicaragua	Sudan
Algeria	El Salvador	Korea (South)	Niger	Tajikistan
Angola	Equatorial Guinea	Kyrgyzstan	Nigeria	Tanzania
Azerbaijan	Eritrea	Laos	Niue	Thailand
Bangladesh	Eswatini (Swaziland)	Lesotho	Northern Mariana Isl.	Timor-Leste
Benin	Ethiopia	Liberia	Pakistan	Togo
Bhutan	Fiji	Libya	Palau	Turkmenistan
Bolivia	Gabon	Lithuania	Panama	Tuvalu
Botswana	Gambia	Macau (China SAR)	Papua New Guinea	Uganda
Brazil	Georgia	Madagascar	Paraguay	Ukraine
Brunei Darussalam	Ghana	Malawi	Peru	Uzbekistan
Burkina Faso	Greenland	Malaysia	Philippines	Vanuatu
Burundi	Guam	Mali	Romania	Venezuela
Cambodia	Guinea	Marshall Islands	Russian Federation	Vietnam
Cameroon	Guinea-Bissau	Mauritania	Rwanda	Yemen
Cape Verde	Guyana	Micronesia, Fed. States	Sao Tome and Principe	Zambia
Central African Republic	Haiti	Moldova	Senegal	Zimbabwe
Chad	Hong Kong (China SAR)	Mongolia	Sierra Leone	
China (inc. Taiwan)	India	Morocco	Singapore	
Congo	Indonesia	Mozambique	Solomon Islands	
Congo, DR	Iraq	Myanmar (Burma)	Somalia	
Cote d'Ivoire	Kazakhstan	Namibia	South Africa	
Djibouti	Kenya	Nauru	South Sudan	
Dominican Republic	Kiribati	Nepal	Sri Lanka	

TB Service Contact Details

Sydney	Canterbury Hospital 9787 0946	Concord Hospital 9767 5675	Royal Prince Alfred 9515 8615
South West Sydney	Liverpool Hospital 8738 4888		
Northern Sydney	Hornsby Hospital 9485 6366	Mona Vale Hospital 9998 6136	Royal North Shore Hospital 9463 1360
Central Coast	Gosford Hospital 4320 3388		
South East Sydney	Prince of Wales Hospital 9382 4643	St George Hospital 9113 2430	Sydney Hospital 9382 7535
Illawarra and Shoalhaven	Wollongong Hospital 4253 4138		
Western Sydney	Parramatta Health Service 9843 3110		
Nepean Blue Mountains	Nepean Hospital 4734 2536		
Hunter New England	John Hunter Hospital 4921 3372	Tamworth Community Centre 6767 7786	Armidale Community Health 6776 9958
Northern NSW & Mid North Coast	Lismore Population Health 6620 2280	Coffs Harbour Health Campus 6656 7855	
Southern & Murrumbidgee	Bega Community Health 6492 9620	Griffith Community Health 6966 9900	Queanbeyan Community Health 6298 9233
	Wagga Wagga Hospital 5943 1000	Goulburn Community Health 4827 3913	
Far West & Western NSW	Broken Hill Population Health (08) 8080 1510		