

Yellow Fever

The disease

- Yellow Fever is a disease spread by the bite of a specific mosquito, found in some parts of Africa and South America. It is not spread human to human.
- It is a serious disease often with flu like symptoms, although for 15% of people it can develop into jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes), liver, kidney, lung or other organ failure, bleeding in parts of the body, as well as vomiting blood. 20-50% of people who experience these symptoms die from them.
- There is no cure for the disease so prevention is essential.

Ways to prevent Yellow Fever

- Using DEET on exposed skin and treating clothes with permethrin.
- Wearing long sleeved tops and pants, especially in the evening and in the morning.
- Staying in air conditioned/screened rooms to prevent open windows etc to cool rooms, or sleeping in permethrin-treated mosquito nets.

Reasons to vaccinate

- Some countries legally require proof of vaccination at borders. If vaccination is contraindicated, a medical waiver can be written by a certified doctor. All Yellow Fever vaccines must be prescribed by Chris Masters at Ropata Medical Centre.
- For personal protection if your travels take you to at risk areas.
- Risk of developing Yellow Fever in parts of Africa over a 2 week stay in an area where the disease is found is 50 per 100,000. The risk of death from the illness is 10 per 100,000.
- Risk of developing Yellow Fever in South America over a 2 week stay in an area where the disease is found is 5 per 100,000. The risk of death from the illness is 1 per 100,000.

Reasons not to vaccinate

- Vaccine is not licenced for those under 9 months of age.
- Patients over 60 years may be contraindicated due to increased risk of side effects of the vaccine.
- Anyone who has previously had an allergic reaction to the vaccine or components in it.
- Anyone who is on immune suppressant therapy or who has a compromised immunity.

Vaccination

- The vaccine is a single dose, live vaccine which will provide immunity for life.
- Most common reactions are a sore site where given, tiredness, general body ache and headache and may come on 6 hours post vaccination and last up to 5-10 days.
- There are some people (1 per 150,000-250,000 doses) that develop severe nervous system reactions, 3-28 days after vaccination. This is rarely fatal.
- Even rarer, 1 in 200,000-300,000 doses may develop life threatening illness, with major organ system failure (and 1 in 40,000-50,000 in over 60yrs of age).
- Signs of more concerning reactions are high fever, change in behaviour or flu like symptoms 1-30 days post vaccination.