

TRAVEL VACCINATIONS & MEDICINES FOR TRAVEL

Guidance to the charging of Travel vaccinations & Occupational Health vaccinations

TRAVEL VACCINATIONS:

Regulations state:

Part 5 Paragraph 24 GMS Regulations (2004), Section (2) – Fees & Charges

'The Contractor (GP) shall not, either itself or through any other party, demand or accept from any patient of its (ie a patient on its NHS list) a fee or other remuneration, for its own or other's benefit, for:

- a) the provision of any treatment under the contract or otherwise; or
- b) any prescription or repeatable prescription for any drug, medicine or appliance,'

except in the circumstances set out in Schedule 5.

Schedule 5 contains 12 clauses setting out the circumstance in which a contractor (GP) may 'demand or accept a fee' when treating a patient on its own list. With regard to vaccinations and other prescriptions involving foreign travel the following clauses are relevant:

- (g) for treatment consisting of an immunization for which no remuneration is payable by the Primary Care Trust and which is requested in connection with travel abroad.**
- (h) for prescribing or providing drugs, medicines or appliances (including a collection of such drugs, medicines or appliances in the form of a travel kit) which a patient requires to have in his possession solely in anticipation of the onset of an ailment or occurrence of an injury while he is outside the United Kingdom but for which he is not requiring treatment when the medicine is prescribed.**
- (i) for prescribing or providing drugs or medicines for malaria prophylaxis.**

The NHS has divided **travel vaccinations** into 2 groups:

- 1) Allowable within NHS (for public health reasons)
 - Tetanus
 - Typhoid
 - Hepatitis **A**
 - Polio
 - (Cholera)

- 2) Not allowable within NHS ie **chargeable to patient** (basic cost + *administration fee*)
 - Hepatitis **B**
 - Yellow fever
 - Meningitis ACW &Y
 - Japanese B Encephalitis

Rabies
Tick-borne encephalitis

Part of the *administration fee* for group 2) vaccinations may include travel advice but this should not be separated from the administration fee when billing the patient because group 1) vaccinations are allowable within the NHS so charging a fee for advice for group 2) vaccinations would be charging for a service available within the NHS.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH VACCINATIONS

Under Health and safety legislation it is the employer (or teaching institution in the case of students) that has the responsibility for undertaking an occupational health assessment and providing any necessary vaccinations for occupational reasons. Patients requesting a GP to prescribe and administer occupational vaccinations such as Hepatitis B should advise the patient to contact to the relevant occupational health department.

As mentioned in Paragraph 24 of the GMS Regulations (2004) a GP may not charge any patient **registered on the practice list** a fee for treatment except in the circumstances laid out in Schedule 5 above. **Unfortunately, neither are occupational health vaccinations included anywhere within Schedule 5 nor are they allowable for re-imburement within the NHS.** (Hence the only way in which a GP can provide an occupational vaccination to a registered patient is to do so with financial loss.)

However,

- a) A practice may levy a fee from a patient NOT registered on the practice list.
- b) Schedule 5 makes a further provision as follows:

‘A practice may accept a fee from any body, employer or school for a routine examination of persons for whose welfare the body, employer or school is responsible, or an examination of such persons for the purpose of advising the body, employer or school of any administrative action they might take’

This legislation allows practices to enter into a contract with an employer for the provision of occupational vaccinations for registered patients as the practice will **not** be charging the patient but the employer.