

Choosing a Travel Health Clinic in Manitoba

Travel health clinics are a valuable resource for the frequent and the occasional traveller. Pre-travel preparation is more than just vaccines. Your visit should include sufficient time to address issues such as traveller's diarrhea, malaria, altitude illness, dengue fever, jet lag, among others. While the Manitoba Travel Health Network does not promote specific clinics, we can offer general guidance to travellers on how best to choose a good travel health clinic:

- 1. Look for a clinic that offers customized care.** Your pre-travel visit should begin with an in-person assessment and include an individualized plan specific to your health history, destination itinerary, and potential activities.
- 2. Ask about counselling to reduce the risks of travel that cannot be prevented by vaccines.** Pre-travel preparation is more than just vaccines. Your visit should include sufficient time to address issues such as traveller's diarrhea, malaria, altitude illness, dengue fever, jet lag, among others.
- 3. Ask about clinic charges and payment.** Charges vary widely and pre-travel health services are non-insurable through Manitoba Health, meaning you have to pay for these services. Most travel health costs may not be reimbursed by private health insurance. Know that some clinics work on a commission basis and providers receive a percentage of the revenue, while others are cost recovery. Be aware of potential conflicts of interest.
- 4. Inquire about the training and experience of your provider.** Quality pre-travel care should be offered by a health professional such as a Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, or Pharmacist. However, there are few Canadian national standards for entry into the practice of travel medicine. While having a Certificate in Travel Medicine™ through ISTM (International Society of Travel Medicine), having a membership in a professional organization such as ISTM or ATHNA (American Travel Health Nurses Association), or having Yellow Fever Designation through PHAC (Public Health Agency of Canada) is no guarantee, it may suggest a larger commitment to the specialty of travel medicine.
- 5. Think about finding a clinic early, even before you make final payment for your trip.** While most travellers need only one visit to prepare for their journey, others may require multiple visits. Ideally, you should start 4 to 6 weeks ahead of departure. However, it is never too late to receive pre-travel care. Travellers seen just hours before a flight can still reduce important travel risks.