

CHOLERA and E.COLI

Cholera is a bacterial infection of the intestine which causes profuse and watery diarrhoea. The infection is often mild and without symptoms but can sometimes be life threatening. It occurs in many developing countries with poor hygiene and sanitation, and is particularly high risk in war zones, refugee camps, and in areas suffering from natural disasters.

E Coli is the most common cause of travellers' diarrhoea, such as "Bali Belly" or "Delhi Belly". It can cause severe watery diarrhoea, blood in the stools, vomiting, abdominal pains, fevers, and lethargy. Many people are completely out of action for days or longer with E Coli infection.

PREVENTION



The best protection is to avoid contaminated food and water. Drink bottled, boiled or treated water. Avoid leafy uncooked vegetables, salads and buffets. Ensure foods are well cooked and served hot, especially meat and fish.

VACCINE



Dukoral is approximately 85% effective in preventing and reducing the severity of cholera. It also protects against E Coli, and can reduce the overall risk of travellers' diarrhoea by up to 30%. For adults and children over 6 years of age, 2 sachets of vaccine are given orally, about a week apart. Children under 6 years of age require 3 doses.

Cholera vaccination is recommended for all travellers at high risk of infection, e.g: working in refugee camps, disaster zones, health care workers in developing countries, travelling to areas with recent cholera outbreaks.

The vaccine is also useful for anyone who would like to reduce their risk of travellers' diarrhoea by protecting themselves against E Coli. This is particularly important if you have any history of bowel problems, are prone to diarrhoea, or have other serious medical problems. It is also useful if you have important activities planned during your trip, such as a wedding, or an important business meeting.

There is no longer any 'official' requirement for cholera vaccination for arriving travellers to any country, but some border officials may request evidence of vaccination. Please discuss this with your Travel Medicine Doctor.



TREATMENT

Cholera can sometimes be a severe infection, requiring hospitalization for antibiotics and intravenous fluid replacement. Children are particularly prone to serious illness from cholera infection, which can sometimes be life threatening.

For treatment of E Coli infection, please see information sheet on Travellers' Diarrhoea.

