

**HEALTH**

**PROMOTION**

**AUDIT**

**TRAVEL HEALTH**

# Travel health

You undoubtedly provide a great deal of advice and sell a range of products to people going on holiday. For people travelling abroad you may give advice on malaria prophylaxis, vaccinations, 'holiday tummy', travel sickness and sun screens / safe sun. Some of this advice is also relevant to people taking holidays in the UK.

## Sun awareness

One area very appropriate for increased pharmacy activity and audit is advice and information about safe exposure to the sun and the use of sunscreens. At present all pharmacies stock some sun screen preparations but not all give appropriate advice on best products for customer needs, and on safe exposure to the sun in general.

Customers visit pharmacies to purchase holiday requisites, whether these are 'first-aid' products such as diarrhoea treatments, calamine lotion and so on. When they do so you can use the opportunity to remind them of other needs such as anti-malarials if appropriate and use each opportunity to remind them about sun exposure wherever they plan to go. You can ensure that people have appropriate information about the effects of the sun, whether they are holidaying in exotic locations or are exposed to the sun in the UK, whether on holiday or simply gardening or working outdoors.

There are about 28,000 cases of skin cancer in England and about 1300 deaths. The incidence of skin cancers is rising through malignant melanomas and non-malignant skin cancers.

## What can you do? Health promotion opportunities

- Provide pharmacy-based health education on the harmful effects of the sun. This is an all year-round issue, since people travel to foreign parts in the British winter. Remember that people who go skiing in winter may expose themselves to the sun and may be unaware of the risks.
- Display posters about the harmful effects of the sun, and display leaflets and give these to customers who come into your pharmacy for holiday requisites.
- Display posters showing what skin cancers look like, especially malignant melanoma so that customers know what they are looking for - this may help them to get treatment in time
- Stock a range of sun screens with high SPFs (sun protection factors)
- Advise customers about the most appropriate sun screen for their skin type - if possible display a chart showing this
- Give talks to local schools ('get them young') and other groups on this subject
- Provide window displays combining sun screen products and information about safe sun exposure
- Provide information to patients on drugs known to cause problems with sun exposure. PMRs will help here. Ensure that patients on photo-sensitising medication use sunblocks and let them know which ones are available on NHS prescription, provide information and advice to people who come into the pharmacy suffering with sunburn to prevent it happening again.

### You need to be aware of:

- the risk factors for skin cancer
- what the different SPF factors for sun screen mean
- the differences between UVA and UVB skin damage (Remember UVA "ages" the skin, UVB "burns" the skin)

Barriers to good sun awareness include:

- People are often unaware that dangerous sunburn can occur in the UK
- People still think a tan is healthy. Remember: it's cool to be pale
- Young people don't think skin cancer will happen until later life and so dismiss it.

## Three audits on sun awareness

You should think about the best ways in which your pharmacy can help raise public awareness of skin cancer and safe tanning. In conducting audit, you should think about ways in which you can measure the impact on this public awareness and what targets you can set to track activity, as well as the outcomes that can be most easily measured.

### 1 Advice on sun awareness

#### **Criterion**

Customers buying sun preparations will be offered appropriate advice.

#### **Action**

Decide which sunscreens to keep, bearing in mind the inconsistencies over SPF's

- Set up a protocol for appropriate advice
- Use a 'skin types' chart giving appropriate SPF depending on skin type and intended exposure
- Record data over a fixed period of time. This will depend on turnover and size of business and population served.

The data could be:

Sun product requested	Advice given	Advice taken
✓	✓	✓
✗ but other holiday requisites sought	✓	✗
✗	✓	✓

and so on.

This could be done in the spring/early summer and again in the winter months to tackle the winter sun / skiing market.

#### **Possible standards**

- All customers wishing to purchase sun screens will be given appropriate advice about SPF's and sun exposure
- (x%) of customers purchasing other holiday requisites will be asked whether they are aware of the need for sun screens.

## 2. The use of leaflets about safe sun

### **Criterion**

Customers should have access to good quality health promotion leaflets about sun awareness.

### **Action**

- Ensure all staff know about sun awareness and about what the audit is for
- Display leaflets by / near sun screen products as near to eye level as possible
- Offer leaflets to customers at points of sale
- Check initial stocks
- Check quality of content
- Count leaflet stocks once a week

### **Record**

<b>Numbers of:</b>		
<b>1 Sales</b>	<b>2 Leaflets taken from display</b>	<b>3 Leaflets given at POS</b>

### 3. Sunburn / Skin damage

#### Criterion

Customers presenting with sunburn should be given advice on treatment and future prevention

#### Action

- Decide on protocol for treatment
- Offer leaflets and advice about sun awareness for future prevention
- Decide on time frame e.g. four sunny weeks in June (don't do it in the rain!)

#### Record

Customer presenting	Treatment offered	Previous advice given	Leaflet?
✓	✓	✓	✓

Benefits / outcomes of these three audits

- increased customer awareness about sun damage
- increased customer awareness about correct use of appropriate sun screens
- increased sales of products
- increased customer awareness of you as a health promoter
- possible increased linked sales - other holiday requisites etc

**What have you learnt as a result of undertaking the audit?**

**How will your practice change as a result of this audit?**

## Other travel health

The sun awareness audits are very specific and audit small but important areas of service. You may adapt this approach to other travel health issues - auditing for example, the advice you give about malaria and / or vaccinations. Or you may wish to go for a more all-embracing approach to travel health, building in linked sales and information.

### Criterion

Customers going on holiday or travelling for other reasons should be provided with appropriate information and advice to minimise risks to health and to provide travel comfort.

### Action

- Review malaria and vaccination advice, ensuring that all relevant staff have up-to-date information and knowledge, so that intending travellers know well in advance where possible what they need to do.
- Provide a notice telling customers you can provide travel health advice
- Think about holiday health needs: travel sickness prevention, diarrhoea treatment, water purification, 'emergency travel kits' (sterile needles etc for emergency use in more remote holiday areas), sun awareness, first aid dressings etc, safe sex requisites.
- Think about a comprehensive policy to promote travel health, and linked sales of relevant products (i.e. customers asking about travel sickness prevention to be informed about other holiday needs etc.)

#### Checkpoint

Make sure that staff know to check contraindications such as pregnancy, epilepsy, etc where relevant.

### Possible standards

- 1 All customers purchasing one holiday health product will be given information leaflets about travel health in general, together with specific information about pre-travel precautions (malaria and vaccination advice where appropriate) and about travel health products.
- 2 Good quality travel health information leaflets will be sourced and displayed by travel health products
- 3 All customers requesting anti-diarrhoeals will be counselled about oral rehydration etc.

## Resources

- NPA information leaflets on malaria and travel vaccinations (frequently updated and issued to members)
- *Health Promotion and the Community Pharmacist*, produced by the HEA/NPA and published by the HEA, gives resources for leaflets and other information
- *Traveller's Health* by Richard Dawood (Oxford University Press) provides a great deal of information for travellers and could be used as a resource in the pharmacy or stocked for sale. (Available for NPA members through NPA Sales Office at £6.99)

**What have you learnt as a result of undertaking the audit?**

**How will your practice change as a result of this audit?**