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| Assessment of returned travellers with fever |
| As international travel returns to Australia, medical practitioners need to be wary of patients presenting with fever from infections (other than COVID-19) acquired overseas. |
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# History

In addition to a standard medical history, assess:

**Where?** Consider diseases in countries the patient has travelled to; check epidemiological profiles.

**Timing?** Consider onset of symptoms and time since potential exposures, relative to incubation periods.

**Risk behaviours and potential exposures:**

* Vaccination status and chemoprophylaxis (e.g. for malaria)
* History of sexual activity
* Food and water exposures
* Insect or animal bites or exposures
* Substance use, such as alcohol or drugs
* Use of healthcare services
* Activities and environments e.g. diving, caving, swimming in lakes, mountaineering, etc

# Common illnesses to consider

* Malaria
* Infectious gastroenteritis
* Influenza like illnesses (ILIs) and other viral upper respiratory tract infections, including COVID-19
* Enteric fever (Typhoid and paratyphoid)
* Dengue, Chikungunya and other mosquito-borne diseases
* Hepatitis A
* Mpox (previously known as monkeypox)
* Scrub typhus and other rickettsial infections
* Rabies
* Common infectious diseases, such as pneumonia, cellulitis etc

# Investigations

Investigations should be tailored to the suspected diseases based on history and examination. The following investigations may be considered, if clinically indicated:

* Full blood examination
* Urea, electrolytes & creatinine, liver function tests
* Blood cultures
* Respiratory multiplex PCR
* Urinalysis +/- MCS +/- chlamydia/gonorrhoea PCR
* Stool for cultures +/- ova/cysts/parasites
* Serology for dengue fever, rickettsia, strongyloides, HIV, Hepatitis A/B/C/E
* Malarial thick and thin films, taken on at least two separate occasions
* CXR

# Incubation periods of common conditions

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| **<10 days** | **Up to 21 days** | **>21 days** |
| Dengue | Malaria | Malaria |
| Influenza | Viral haemorrhagic fevers | Viral hepatitis |
| Yellow fever | Rickettsial disease | HIV infection |
| Paratyphoid fevers | Typhoid fever | Rabies |
| Legionella | Brucellosis | Amoebic liver abscess |
|  | Leptospirosis | Tuberculosis |
|  |  | Visceral leishmaniasis |

# Notification

Many of the infectious diseases diagnosed in returning travellers are notifiable conditions. Where applicable, please ensure a notification to the Victorian Department of Health is completed. A list of the notifiable conditions and how to notify can be found on [the department website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/notifiable-infectious-diseases-conditions-and-micro-organisms): <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/notifiable-infectious-diseases-conditions-and-micro-organisms>

# References

Leggat, PA 2007, ‘[Assessment of febrile illness in the returned traveller](https://www.racgp.org.au/getattachment/54226dae-628f-487b-8029-d5dadc43b346/200705leggatt.pdf)’, *Australian Family Physician*, vol 36, no. 5, p. 328-333, <https://www.racgp.org.au/getattachment/54226dae-628f-487b-8029-d5dadc43b346/200705leggatt.pdf>

[Emergency Care Institute 2021, State Government of New South Wales, Sydney](https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/eci/clinical/clinical-tools/infectious-diseases/returned-traveller), viewed 16 February 2021, <https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/eci/clinical/clinical-tools/infectious-diseases/returned-traveller>

Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, ‘[General Approach to the Returned Traveller](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2024/posttravel-evaluation/general-approach-to-the-returned-traveler#eval)’ *CDC Yellow Book 2024,* viewed 27 May 2024,<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2024/posttravel-evaluation/general-approach-to-the-returned-traveler#eval>

To receive this document in another format, phone 1300 651 160 (24 hours), using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email infectious.diseases@health.vic.gov.au

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Available from the Department of Health’s website, [Assessment of returned travellers with fever | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/assessment-of-returned-travellers-with-fever) < https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/assessment-of-returned-travellers-with-fever >