



## MEDICAL GUIDELINES FOR TRANSPLANT ATHLETES ATTENDING WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA – AUGUST 2009

Dear Athletes

Congratulations on being chosen to participate in the World Transplant Games. Your involvement in the games will contribute greatly to donor awareness. You will also increase the positive attitude towards the rich benefits of transplantation. You will enjoy remarkable personal development and world friendships. Probably you will achieve personal bests in your chosen events. There are also possibilities that you will win medals. It is anticipated that you are well advanced in your preparation, your training and in your provision of drugs, supplies, equipment and clothing. The following information is provided as a reminder in your preparation for your travels and competition.

### 1 Medical Certification

All athletes are required to complete and return the medical certificate for assessment at least six weeks prior to travelling to Australia.

### 2 Environmental Conditions

Australia will be warm and the air is extremely pure on the Gold Coast.

### 3 Traffic

Road traffic is dense and vehicles travel on the left side of the road. Always look **right** first before trying to cross a road. Always use pedestrian crossings, especially crossing from the Convention Centre to your apartment and Broadbeach. If driving you drive clockwise around roundabouts.

### 4 Allergies

If athletes are allergic to peanuts, bees or latex, it will be necessary to wear a **Medic Alert Bracelet** and if possible carry an ampule of  $1/1000$  adrenaline.

## **5 Hygiene**

The venues for accommodation, dining and competition will all provide safe and hygienic environments, food and liquids. The off campus dining will also be very safe.

## **6 Contagion**

Contagious disease is under constant surveillance in Australia. In the event of a life threatening disease outbreak, the authorities are well placed to contain the disease and will communicate widely and quickly if a disorder appears in the community. However, it is the responsibility of the athlete to self report if fever or a rash should develop. In relation to influenza please see the separate advisory previously distributed and available at [www.wordltransplantgames09.com](http://www.wordltransplantgames09.com).

## **7 Jet Lag**

Long flights are responsible for disturbed patterns of sleep, vibration fatigue and disruption of diurnal rhythms. Also the change in time zones may cause the athletes to miss a medication dose. Athletes should be aware that the above challenges persist for several days, the duration being governed by the number of hours of change in the time zone. That is if the athlete finds that the Gold Coast time zone is 6 hours ahead of that of your own zone, poor sleeping will persist for 6 days. Try to accelerate recovery. Try to avoid sleeping during daylight.

## **8 Training**

Training requires planning and dedicating a significant amount of time to your preparation. It is necessary to taper before you compete. Therefore in the last week before you travel, your activities should be less intense. Please do not rely on training during the 10 days of the games as the facilities may be limited and you may do yourself harm.

## **9 Equipment and Supplies**

All equipment, including footwear should be well prepared and worn in. Do not buy new shoes just prior to competition. Please wear footwear in the public showers. Please bring all your own dressings and bandages.

## **10 Medication**

It is vital to ensure that you have a full supply of medication for your trip. In addition it is necessary to have a duplicate supply of medication for the duration of the trip. These supplies should be carried in two separate packages. One package should be kept in your personal belongings and taken as cabin luggage. The other should be packed in a second case. This is to overcome difficulties if one or other supply is lost. Included in your supply should be Panadol, Vick's vapour rub, liniment methyl salicylic acid or deep heat, antiseptic cream, sun screen and a supply of bandages and dressings which you prefer to use. Supplies of anti-viral treatments should also be carried following confirmation from your doctor. You may also wish to carry supplementary vitamins and sports electrolyte solutions. You should carry a letter from your clinician outlining the drugs which are essential to your health to ensure that the drugs are not confiscated. Do not carry drugs of addiction.

## **11 Travel**

You should be aware that being restricted in an aircraft cabin will lead to swelling of your ankles. This is not a result of water overload. It is a consequence of decreased muscle activity of your legs. To overcome this it is necessary to wear one way stretch stockings up to the knees to prevent the swelling. Once the swelling has occurred it is very difficult to overcome. Therefore prevention is the preferred option. You would also be aware of the risk of deep venous thrombosis. This can be overcome to a large extent by exercising in your seat and also walking about if at all possible. Some team members will also have the opportunity to take a 1/4 of an aspirin every day for a week prior to the travel. However this may be contraindicated so you should ensure this is safe before you do so. Please do not use diuretics to remove the ankle swelling.

## **12 Dehydration**

Aircraft travel and competition is associated with a significant dehydration. One of the commonest failures of transplant athletes in transit and in competition is a failure to maintain hydration. Dehydration may cause side effects such as increasing concentration of immunosuppressive drugs and this should be avoided at all costs. It is necessary to carry fluids with you at all times. Please drink bottled water or sports solutions.

## **13 Clothing and Keeping Dry**

It will be necessary to have light clothing which will cover you completely. Importantly, if, through your activities your clothing becomes moist, it will be necessary to have a change of clothing. Dryness is a key to good health. Similarly, if after competition you perspire or you are wet, it is necessary to dry off completely. To achieve this it is wise to have a supply of towels.

## **14 Injuries, Illness or Medication Complications**

It is important that if there is any concern at all amongst the athletes or for that matter the supporters, the medical officer should be notified immediately. Pleasingly, the clinical support will be very active and experienced. Please report any infection or rash immediately. Contagion of chickenpox must be prevented.

## **15 Competing Without Injury**

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the games is the success of the physiotherapists and their support for athletes prior to, during and after competition. On this occasion we will have physiotherapists. You will be very familiar with the appropriate pre-competition warm up and massage and the importance of stretching and warm down. With these strategies it will be possible to compete on several days without becoming extremely stiff.

## **16 Withdrawal of an Athlete**

An athlete who is in any way concerned about competing or if the medical officer is concerned, then the athlete will be advised to miss certain events. Withdrawal from a sporting event should be seen as a possibility in any athlete's life.

## **17 Failure to Meet Standards**

An athlete may not meet the World Transplant Games standards which have been established over the last 20 years. This circumstance will be brought to the attention of the athlete and the Manager. The athlete will be advised not to compete or not to travel.

## **18 Communication**

The athletes should be aware that the administration of the World Transplant Games will be determined to provide excellent communications. Communications however are always flawed. To overcome this we would recommend that wherever possible telephone communication should be made available so that any confusion will be overcome very quickly. Keep all documents. Double check all dates, times and locations. Call the Team Manager if you have doubts or advice.

## **19 Support**

It is vital to all athletes to recognise how important supporters will be to their success. Every effort should be made to ensure that a member of the team (either athlete or supporter) is available during competition so that you may be able to look to a friend for support during the event. Do not compete alone. Please ask for help.

## **20 Diet**

You should not be unwilling to partake in the diet available as it will be immaculately prepared. However it is important to emphasize that trying new food may be hazardous for athletes. Please carry cashews, raisins and bananas to the events. Diabetics should carry sugar lollies.

## **21 Skin and Eye Protection**

Please think ahead and carry head protection, block out and wear long sleeves. Sunglasses are required to prevent cataracts.

## **22 Insurance**

Be sure to have health insurance for any associated trips. Please do not leave these documents behind.

## **23 Teamwork**

The athletes and supporters (including the medical officer) should form a friendly and cohesive team where members can talk openly with each other. Watch out for athletes with hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). Hypoglycaemia appears as sweating, confusion and collapse.

## **24 Habits**

No team member should smoke or undertake use of recreational drugs. We will be entering high security where even pseudoephedrine (for sinusitis) may be detected in small quantities by airport security spectrophotometry screening of bags.

## **25 Recreation and Sleep**

Relaxation is vital for health and sporting success as is a sound sleep hygiene. Avoid excess coffee and alcohol to preserve regular sleep pattern. Strive to stay awake until dark. Be sure to be out in the sun at midday briefly (with protection) to readjust your biorhythms.

## **26 Advice**

If you have any advice which you wish to share with team members please advise your Team Manager to facilitate dissemination.

## **27 Blood Tests**

These can be arranged through the games health services.

## **28 Diabetes Mellitus (DM)**

DM is common. Please ensure that all teams carry appropriate sweets for any diabetic team members.

## **29 Alcohol**

Consumption of excess alcohol is dangerous and can poison organs, cause confusion and falls and MOST importantly alcohol depresses judgement centres in the brain. Under such influence the athlete may become involved in fights or illegal activities.

## **30 Vaccinations**

It is not necessary to undergo vaccinations to visit. However, it would be wise to ensure that your tetanus toxoid vaccinations is up to date.

## **31 Australian Hazards**

While in Australia it will be necessary to take particular care to avoid –

- dangerous surf (see signs) This is probably the biggest hazard during your stay on the Gold Coast. Always bath between the flags. Avoid early morning and late afternoon/dusk or evening swims when there is no surf lifesaver cover.
- sun burn (wear hats) The Australia sun is quite fierce, even in the cooler months. Wear appropriate sun cover—hats, sun cream and protective clothing.
- sharks and stingers (only North Queensland)
- crocodiles (only North Queensland)
- insects (uncommon, no malaria)
- dehydration (carry water)
- wounds (wear shoes) The Gold Coast beaches are beautiful but sometimes sharp shells wash ashore
- mischief (be home before 12.30 am)

### **32 Medical alert bracelet and medical information card**

It is necessary at all times to wear a medical alert bracelet if the athlete has a serious illness (diabetics) and the provided medical information card must be carried in the identification card pouch.

### **33 Misfortune and misadventure**

In anticipation of difficulties it is recommended that a list of telephone numbers and emergency responses be carried with your identification card pouch at all times.

## **SUMMARY**

The supporting staff of the World Transplant Games wishes you success in your preparation for the Games. Every effort will be made to ensure that you have a safe and successful participation. Any documentation that the team member requires in support of his or her health care should be carried at all times. On occasion it will be necessary to refer the athlete to the local medical services. Appropriate documentation would be valuable on such occasions. Preparation is necessary for both your competition and your health.