HEALTH PREVENTION GUIDE

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HEALTH PREVENTION GUIDE

Dear users, in this guide you will find information about common and frequent diseases in the general population, and particularly among migrants, as well as endemic diseases in our region. Additionally, you will find relevant information about vaccination, family planning, and mental health.

This manual is part of the actions developed in the project "Promoting the Health of Immigrants: A Holistic Approach", coordinated by Prof. Dr. Paula Fernández, and it was realized with the support of the International Relations Office (PROINT) of the Federal University for Latin American Integration (UNILA), the Affirmative Action and Equity Office (SECAFE/UNILA), the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Chair (CSVM-UNILA), and the Association of Young Haitians in Health Sciences (AJHASS). It is designed to help you prevent diseases or seek professional assistance quickly if you or someone close to you experiences symptoms.

The city of Foz do Iguaçu provides comprehensive healthcare services, with professionals equipped to deliver quality care through the Unified Health System (SUS for its Portuguese acronym) in both primary and emergency care units *(See Guide on the Unified Health System for Migrants, Refugees, and Stateless Persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

WE EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF ALWAYS CONSULTING A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR SYMPTOMS, AND TO REMEMBER THAT SUS IS UNIVERSAL; THIS MEANS THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS SEEKING CARE MUST BE ATTENDED TO, INCLUDING MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND STATELESS PERSONS.

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HYPERTENSION

What is hypertension?

Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, occurs when the blood exerts too much force on the walls of the arteries as it circulates through the body, forcing the heart to work harder to pump blood.

In general, normal blood pressure is around 120/80 mmHg. When the pressure frequently exceeds 140/90 mmHg, it is classified as hypertension.

Symptoms

High blood pressure often causes no visible symptoms, making it dangerous. However, when symptoms do appear, they may include severe headaches, dizziness or vertigo, blurred or double vision, fatigue or confusion, chest pain, difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeats, nosebleeds (in severe cases), and ringing in the ears.

It is important to be cautious because, over time, high blood pressure can lead to serious complications, such as heart disease, strokes, and kidney problems.

Risk factors for developing hypertensionl

- Smoking.
- Alcohol consumption.
- Obesity and being overweight.
- Stress and anxiety.
- Poor diet with high salt intake.
- Lack of physical activity.
- High cholesterol levels.
- Family history of hypertension.

How can I prevent it?

- Measure your blood pressure at least once a year.
- Maintain an ideal weight and avoid obesity.
- Reduce alcohol consumption. If possible, do not drink.
- Never stop treatment; it is for life.
- Avoid stress. Make time for family, friends and leisure.
- Engage in daily physical activity.
- Adopt a healthy diet: low salt, avoid fried foods, and include more fruits, vegetables, and legumes.
- If you smoke, quit smoking.
- Follow your doctor's or healthcare professional's advice.

High blood pressure cannot be cured, but if treated, it can be controlled. Make healthy choices and take care of your health.

If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, seek medical attention at the Basic Health Unit (UBS for its Portuguese Acronym) in your neighborhood *(See Guide on the Unified Health System for migrants, refugees, and stateless persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

DIABETES

What is diabetes?
Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body cannot properly produce or use insulin, resulting in high blood sugar levels. There are different types of diabetes, with the main ones being:

Type 1 Diabetes:
An autoimmune disease that destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. It is usually diagnosed in young people and requires daily insulin injections.

Type 2 Diabetes: The most common type, it occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or doesn't produce enough. It is associated with being overweight and a sedentary lifestyle, and having a family history of diabetes. It can be managed with diet, exercise, and medication.

Gestational Diabetes: Develops during pregnancy and usually disappears after childbirth but increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes in the future.

Other less common forms of diabetes include **MODY Diabetes**, a genetic disease affecting the genes responsible for regulating blood sugar levels, and **LADA Diabetes**, a late-onset autoimmune form that appears in adults, presenting symptoms similar to type 1 diabetes.

Symptoms

The main symptoms of diabetes include: urinating more than 3 liters per day, excessive thirst and hunger, unexplained weight loss, dehydration, frequent need to urinate at night, fatigue, weakness, and tiredness, blurred vision, itchiness, frequent infections, slow healing of wounds, and, in men, inflammation of the penile gland.

Risk factors for developing diabetes

There are non-modifiable risk factors, such as being of Asian origin, being over 45 years old, and having a first-degree relative with diabetes. Modifiable risk factors include being overweight or obese and lack of physical activity. The presence of other conditions such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, polycystic ovary syndrome, and high cholesterol also increases the risk of diabetes

How can I prevent it?

To prevent type 2 diabetes, it is essential to: control your weight, follow a proper nutritional plan, engage in regular physical activity, reduce sedentary time, improve sleep quality, quit smoking and manage stress.

For type 1 diabetes, prevention involves educating oneself about the disease, insulin treatment, nutritional guidance, and moderate physical activity.

If you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, seek medical attention at your neighborhood UBS or contact the Foz do Iguaçu Diabetes Institute (ADIFI for its Portuguese Acronym). Link : https://www.institutoadifi.com.br/ *(See Guide on the Unified Health System for migrants, refugees, and stateless persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

TUBERCULOSIS

What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis. It usually affects the lungs but can also infect other organs in the body. TB is transmitted through the air when a person with active pulmonary tuberculosis coughs, sneezes, or talks, releasing infectious particles.

Symptoms

The main signs and symptoms of tuberculosis include: persistent cough for more than three weeks, fever, night sweats, weight loss and fatigue. Other associated signs may include chest pain, loss of appetite, coughing up blood (hemoptysis), and difficulty breathing.

Risk factors for developing tuberculosis

Risk factors include close contact with infected individuals, living or working in overcrowded and poorly ventilated areas, having a weakened immune system (such as in people with HIV), malnutrition, smoking, and substance abuse.

How can I prevent it?

Preventing tuberculosis includes: vaccination with the BCG vaccine (See the Vaccination section of this guide), especially in countries where TB is common; early detection and proper treatment of cases; wearing masks in high-risk environments; improving living conditions, such as ensuring adequate ventilation and reducing overcrowding in enclosed spaces.

If you exhibit any of the symptoms mentioned above or have been in contact with individuals infected with tuberculosis, seek medical attention at your neighborhood UBS *(See Guide on the Unified Health System for migrants, refugees, and stateless persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

What are STIs?

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are diseases caused by bacterias, viruses or parasites that are primarily transmitted through unprotected sexual contact. These infections can often be asymptomatic, making early diagnosis difficult and increasing the risk of serious complications such as infertility, chronic infections, and cervical cancer, among others. Untreated STIs can also facilitate the spread to others, creating a continuous cycle of transmission within the community

Early screening and appropriate treatment are essential to prevent complications, as well as to identify and treat sexual partners, avoiding reinfection and sustained transmission. Common STIs, such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis, can be prevented and controlled through condom use, vaccination, regular testing, and prompt treatment.

STIs can affect anyone, regardless of gender and/ or sexual orientation.

Symptoms

STIs can be silent or present various symptoms, such as: unusual vaginal or urethral discharge, sores or ulcers in the genital area, pain during urination or sexual intercourse, genital itching, fever and general malaise.

Since many STIs are asymptomatic, it is crucial to undergo regular screening, even in the absence of visible symptoms. If you experience these or any other symptoms, seek out your nearest Basic Health Unit or healthcare service.

Some common STIs include:

Chlamydia: A bacterial infection caused by Chlamydia trachomatis, it is very common among sexually active young people. It is often asymptomatic, especially in women, making early diagnosis difficult. If untreated, chlamydia can lead to serious complications, such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility, and pregnancy complications. Regular screening and condom use are essential to prevent infection and its complications.

Gonorrhea: Caused by the bacterium Neisseria gonorrhoeae, gonorrhea primarily affects the urinary tract, genitals, rectum, and throat. It may be asymptomatic, but often causes symptoms such as purulent discharge and pain during urination. If left untreated, it can lead to infertility, chronic pain, and increased risk of HIV infection. Prevention involves using condoms and regular screening, especially in high-risk populations.

Trichomoniasis: A common infection caused by the parasite Trichomonas vaginalis. It is often asymptomatic but may cause strong-smelling vaginal discharge, itching, and pain during urination in women. The infection is associated with pregnancy complications and increased risk of acquiring HIV. Prevention includes using condoms and ensuring that both the individual and their sexual partners receive appropriate treatment.

Syphilis: A bacterial infection caused by Treponema pallidum, syphilis progresses in stages. In the early stage, it can cause painless sores on the genitals, which often go unnoticed. If untreated, syphilis can lead to serious problems, such as damage to the heart, brain, and other organs. Early screening and treatment are crucial to preventing complications and reducing transmission.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus): HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system, leading to AIDS if untreated. It can be transmitted through unprotected sexual contact, sharing needles, and from mother to child during pregnancy. Early symptoms include fever and fatigue, while in advanced stages, there can be weight loss and severe infections. Prevention includes condom use, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), and antiretroviral treatment.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV): HPV is the most common STI, with various strains linked to genital warts and

cancers, such as cervical, anal, and oropharyngeal cancers. The infection is often asymptomatic and may clear on its own, but some types of HPV can cause cancer. Vaccination against HPV is an effective form of prevention, along with condom use and regular cervical screening for women *(See the Vaccination section of this guide).*

Hepatitis B and C: Viral infections that can be sexually transmitted or spread through sharing needles or contact with contaminated blood. These infections affect the liver, causing inflammation that can progress to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer. Hepatitis B can be prevented through vaccination, while condom use and regular screening are important for both forms *(See the Vaccination section of this guide).*

Risk factors

Certain behaviors increase the risk of contracting STIs, including:

- Use of syringes by more than one person.
- Sex without a condom.
- Transfusion of contaminated blood.
- From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeedin.
- Unsterilized instruments that pierce or cut (BRASIL, n.d. d).

How can I prevent them?

Preventing STIs involves essential practices to reduce the risk of transmission:

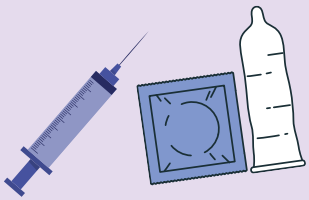
Condom use: This is the most effective way to prevent STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, HPV, and syphilis.

Vaccination: Vaccines for hepatitis B and HPV are available and effective in preventing these infections.

Regular testing: Frequent screening is important, especially for at-risk groups like sexually active people or living with HIV.

Sexual education: Raising awareness about STIs and prevention methods is crucial to reducing the number of infections.

Partner treatment: When diagnosed with an STI,it is essential for treating sexual partners to prevent reinfection and ongoing transmission.



DENGUE, ZIKA, AND CHIKUNGUNYA

What are they?

Dengue, Zika, and Chikungunya are arboviruses, meaning they are viral diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, primarily the *Aedes aegypti*. This mosquito is easily identified by white markings on its legs and back (Brasil, n.d.a).

Symptoms

Dengue can range from asymptomatic cases to severe cases, which may lead to death. Typically, the first manifestation of dengue is a high fever (above 38°C), with sudden onset, usually lasting from 2 to 7 days, accompanied by other symptoms. The severe form of the disease may include intense and continuous abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, dizziness, fainting, bleeding from mucous membranes, among other symptoms. Bleeding is one of the signs of severe dengue, **so medications that increase the risk of bleeding, such as salicylates and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, should not be used.**

Risk factors for developing the disease

The *Aedes aegypti* emosquito is the primary form of transmission through the bite of the female of this insect. Although rare, there are recorded cases of transmission from a pregnant woman to her baby (vertical transmission) and through blood transfusion.

As a result, **people of all ages can contract these diseases**, but individuals with pre-existing conditions, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, children under 5, and people over 65 years old are at greater risk of developing complications.

How can I prevent it?

Brazil is the first country in the world to offer the dengue vaccine in the public health system. It is administered to targeted populations in regions where the disease is more prevalent, as disclosed by the Ministry of Health. In Foz do Iguaçu, **the vaccine is available for children between the ages of 10 and 14.**

Vaccination will play a crucial role alongside other strategies in controlling dengue. For more information about the dengue vaccination, please contact the relevant health authorities in your municipality (*See the Vaccination section of this guide).*

Other ways to prevent the disease include:

- Wearing light-colored clothing to minimize skin exposure during the day when mosquitoes are more active; clothing provides some protection against bites.
- Using repellents and insecticides, following the instructions on the product labels.
- Mosquito nets provide good protection against mosquitoes, as do electric repellents.
- Even with the vaccine and prevention efforts, the main way to control Dengue, Zika, and Chikungunya is to eliminate the breeding grounds of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito by removing stagnant water where the mosquito can lay its eggs.

There is no specific treatment for these diseases. Medications are only symptomatic, such as pain relievers and fever reducers (paracetamol and dipyrone). Salicylates and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be avoided, as they can increase the risk of bleeding and acidosis.

Patients should rest and begin oral hydration. **Therefore, if you experience any of the symptoms mentioned above, seek medical attention** *(See the Guide on the Unified Health System for migrants, refugees, and stateless persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

VACCINATION

Vaccination is one of the most effective measures to prevent diseases and protect public health. Vaccines are biological products that stimulate the immune system to fight off microorganisms such as viruses and bacteria, preventing and avoiding the spread of serious diseases and saving lives

From the first months of life, it is essential to follow the vaccination schedule, which is based on scientific research to ensure maximum protection at each stage of life. In Brazil, vaccines are widely available for free in public health clinics and centers, and are also offered in private clinics.

Getting vaccinated is a collective responsibility. In addition to protecting yourself, vaccination helps to protect the community around you.

To view the **vaccination schedule according to age group and condition**, you can access the following links:

National Technical Vaccination Schedule for **Children.** Link: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/vacinacao/calendario-tecnico/calendario-tecnico-nacional-de-vacinacao-da-crianca

National Technical Vaccination Schedule for **Adolescents.** Link: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/vacinacao/calendario-tecnico/calendario-tecnico-nacional-de-vacinacao-do-adolescente

National Technical Vaccination Schedule for **Adults and Elderly people.** Link: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/vacinacao/calendario-tecnico/calendario-tecnico-nacional-de-vacinacao-do-adulto-e-do-idoso

National Technical Vaccination Schedule for **Pregnant Women**. Link: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/vacinacao/calendario-tecnico/calendario-tecnico-nacional-de-vacinacao-da-gestante

To get vaccinated, go to the nearest health unit with your vaccination card and request an evaluation to update your vaccination schedule. By getting vaccinated and encouraging others to do the same, you reduce the circulation of diseases and create a "wave of prevention". **Vaccination of one individual benefits many others within their social circle. PROTECT YOURSELF!**

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health goes beyond individual emotions; it is influenced by biological, psychological, and social factors. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a state of well-being that allows individuals to develop their personal abilities to face challenges and contribute to their community. Well-being depends on conditions such as physical health, social support, and quality of life, and is also affected by social, economic, and political environments.

The right to health, including mental health, is guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution, and the state is responsible for providing dignified care. In Brazil, the **Psychosocial Care Network (RAPS for its Portuguese Acronym)** offers mental health services within the Unified Health System (SUS), following principles of universality, comprehensiveness, and equity, ensuring accessible and fair care for all.

Crisis Situations: The RAPS assists people in crisis, providing integrated and continuous care. The network includes various services, such as **Psychosocial Care Centers (CAPS for its Portuguese Acronym)**, shelter units, and general hospitals, which work together to offer comprehensive support in mental health, alcohol, and other drugs *(See Guide on the Unified Health System for migrants, refugees, and stateless persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

Social Impacts: Mental health issues are not just individual concerns but also reflect social issues, requiring public policies and protective networks. The stigma associated with mental health is a major challenge, affecting both individuals and the services and professionals involved, creating barriers to seeking help and perpetuating social exclusion.

Overcoming the Stigma: Combating stigma is crucial for improving the quality of life of people with mental health issues and ensuring equal access to services. Understanding, respect, and solidarity are essential for building more inclusive communities and supporting the recovery of those facing mental health challenges.

If you need help, seek assistance at your nearest Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS) or health unit for guidance *(See Guide on the Unified Health System for migrants, refugees, and stateless persons in Foz do Iguaçu).*

ORAL HEALTH

What is oral health?

Oral health involves the care and maintenance of the mouth, teeth, and gums, preventing conditions such as cavities, gingivitis, and other complications. It is essential not only for chewing and speaking but also for overall well-being, as the mouth is the entry point for both the digestive and respiratory systems. Good oral health helps prevent infections and diseases, directly impacting both physical and mental health.

Oral health is a right guaranteed by Federal Law No. 14.572/2023, which established the National Oral Health Policy within the SUS. Although the law is recent (May 2023), dental services are still being organized to serve the entire country.

Oral Health (Children)

The Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA for its Portuguese Acronym) establishes that the SUS must promote medical and dental care programs to prevent childhood diseases, in addition to conducting hygiene education campaigns for families, educators, and students.

Symptoms and oral diseases

The most common oral problems include cavities, bad breath, gingivitis, tartar, plaque buildup, mouth sores, canker sores, misaligned teeth, and early tooth loss.

Note: If you have a painful, progressive ulcer (wound) in your oral cavity that does not heal and bleeds easily, possibly accompanied by throat pain, weight loss, and neck swelling, seek a health unit immediately, as it may be oral cancer.

How can I prevent it?

Maintaining oral health is important for well-being, self-esteem, and overall physical health. A healthy mouth supports proper chewing, which is essential for food digestion and nutrient absorption. Additionally, since the mouth is the gateway to the digestive and respiratory systems, daily care is crucial (Brasil, n.d. b).

To prevent them, it is essential to practice proper daily oral hygiene and brush your teeth after every meal, as well as floss, reduce your sugar intake and maintain a healthy diet. It is also essential to visit the dentist regularly to reduce the chances of developing diseases that poor hygiene can cause.

FAMILY PLANNING

What is family planning?

Family planning is a right guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution under Law No. 9.263, dated January 12, 1996, which regulates the program in the country. Through family planning, individuals and couples are provided with resources to access qualified and safe information to make informed reproductive choices.

Contraceptive methods

Existen diferentes métodos anticonceptivos:

Male and Female Condoms: The most effective method to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and some types of hepatitis, in addition to preventing unplanned pregnancies. There are two types of condoms:

Male condom Made of latex, it should be placed on an erect penis before penetration.

Female condom: Made of latex or nitrile rubber, it is inserted into the vagina and can be placed a few hours before sexual activity, without the need to wait for an erection (Brasil, n.d. b).

Male and female condoms are distributed for free in any public health service

Spermicide: A barrier method applied inside the vagina shortly before intercourse. It must be used correctly but is one of the least effective contraceptive methods. It can be used as a primary method or as supplementary protection.

Oral contraceptives (the pill): Combined oral contraceptives contain two synthetic hormones, estrogen, and progesterone, which work to prevent ovulation during the menstrual cycle.

Emergency contraception: The "morning-after pill" contains hormones and is used after unprotected intercourse to prevent pregnancy. It must be taken within 120 hours, preferably within the first 72 hours after unprotected sex.

It does not interrupt an ongoing pregnancy and should not be used as a regular contraceptive method.

Injectable contraceptives - combined (monthly): Monthly injectable contraceptives are combined hormones (estrogen and progesterone) that inhibit ovulation and prevent the passage of sperm. This contraceptive is administered monthly, and women continue to have regular menstrual periods.

Injectable contraceptive (quarterly): This contraceptive is administered every three months and works by inhibiting ovulation and making it more difficult for sperm to pass through.

Intrauterine device (IUD): A small plastic device coated with copper bands that is inserted into the uterus and provides long-term contraception for up to ten years, though it can be removed at any time if the woman wishes or if there are complications.

Tubal ligation and vasectomy (sterilization): Sterilization is a permanent contraceptive method that can be performed on women through tubal ligation (blocking the fallopian tubes) or on men through vasectomy (blocking the spermatic ducts). A vasectomy prevents sperm from being present in semen, while tubal ligation prevents fertilization by stopping the meeting of the gametes.

Which methods are available in SUS

SUS offers several contraceptive methods: hormonal (oral and injectable), barrier methods (diaphragm and condoms), IUD (intrauterine device), and surgical sterilization methods (tubal ligation and vasectomy).

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