

Overseas Travel Guide for Patients

If you are planning on travelling outside the UK, then ideally you should start preparing for the trip at least 8 weeks before you go. But even if time is short, it's never too late to get travel health advice.

You can get advice on travel vaccinations, malaria prevention and general travel health advice from community pharmacies, your GP practice and private travel clinics.

The following websites also provide up to date, reliable health information to help you plan your trip:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>
<https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>

Malaria Prevention

Will my GP be able to prescribe anti-malaria tablets for me?

Medicines for malaria prevention are not available on the NHS. Some anti-malaria tablets (chloroquine and proguanil) can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy. If a prescription only medicine is required, a GP, certain pharmacies or a travel clinic will be able to provide you with a private prescription. St Thomas Medical Group are (not) able to issue you a prescription (for a cost of £10).

Travel Vaccinations

Can I attend St Thomas Medical Group for travel vaccinations?

Yes, although not all vaccines are available on the NHS.

The first thing to do is to contact us so that a nurse can check your notes to make sure you are up to date with routine vaccinations and advise of any requirements for the country you are travelling to.

Try to make sure you do this at least 8 weeks before you travel as some vaccines need to be given well in advance to ensure you are protected.

The following vaccines are funded by the NHS:

- Diphtheria, polio and tetanus (combined booster)
- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Cholera (depending on certain criteria that will be assessed by a healthcare professional at the clinic/GP surgery)

Vaccines such as Hepatitis B, Rabies, Yellow Fever and Malaria tablets can be obtained privately from Luxton's pharmacy or the Exeter Travel Clinic

‘Just in Case’ Medications

Will my GP prescribe me ‘just in case’ medicines such as antibiotics or oral rehydration sachets?

A GP will only prescribe for your current clinical needs. Therefore ‘just in case’ medicines are not available on the NHS.

It is a good idea to prepare a first aid kit when travelling abroad and your local pharmacy will be able to give you advice on products that can be purchased over the counter, such as oral rehydration sachets, anti-diarrhoea medication, antiseptics etc.

Regular Medications (for existing long-term conditions)

Will my GP prescribe extra medicines to cover my time away?

If you are travelling abroad for up to 3 months, then your GP may supply you with a prescription to cover this period.

Will I be allowed to take my medications into the country I am visiting?

Different countries have different rules and regulations for medicines – including those you can buy over the counter in the UK.

There may be restrictions on the types of medicines and/or the quantities that you are allowed to travel with. Visit the following website for more up to date information (<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/medicines/can-i-take-my-medicine-abroad/>)

Are there any special requirements for controlled drugs?

The rules for controlled drugs depend on the country you are travelling to and the airline you are flying with (if applicable). It is advisable to check directly with your destination Embassy and airline to check the exact requirements.

Anyone taking controlled drugs into/out of the UK also needs to conform to Home Office import/export regulations.

If you are travelling for less than 3 months, you will not require a special licence. However, the Home Office advises that you obtain a letter from your GP or drug worker, which should confirm names, travel itinerary, names of prescribed controlled drugs, dosages and total amounts of each to be carried.

If you are travelling for more than 3 months, it is expected that you will register for medical services in your destination country to obtain your medicines. To take more than 3 months’ worth of controlled drugs out of the UK you need to obtain a Personal Licence form from the Home Office. The application form can be found online and needs to be submitted with a letter a letter from your GP/drug worker at least 10 days prior to travel.

Other countries may also have import regulations, so it is important to check this when you contact the Embassy.

Will I be allowed to take needles/syringes in my hand luggage when I fly?

Yes, you will need to take the items in the original, correctly labelled, packaging along with a copy of your prescription. In addition, they may require you to carry a letter from your GP. It's a good idea to contact the airline you are flying with to check their exact requirements.

Will the 100ml liquid restrictions apply to medicines I need to carry in my hand luggage?

Essential medication required during air travel may be exempt from the maximum 100ml liquid restriction, but this requires a letter and prior approval from the airport and airline. You should contact the airline in advance to make arrangements for this.

Prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis

If you think you may be at risk of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT), seek advice from your GP.

Compression stockings can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy.

Postponement of Menstruation

There's no guaranteed way to delay your period, but it may be possible if you take the combined contraceptive pill. If you do not take a contraceptive pill, speak to your GP for advice. More information can be found here:

[How can I delay my period? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health/a-z/how-can-i-delay-my-period/)

Fear of Flying

The following websites provide information to help with a fear of flying:

Fit for Travel: <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/air-travel/#FearofFlying>

- Fear of flying is common despite being safer than road or rail travel in most developed countries.
- Try distraction by talking with other passengers, watching a film, listening to music or reading.
- Tell the cabin crew. Reassurance about routine aircraft sounds and in-flight activities can help.
- Research shows that Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) can be helpful for more severe cases. The person identifies what they actually fear and then learns different ways of overcoming it.
- A number of airlines run courses aimed at alleviating travellers' fears, such as:
 - [Flying with Confidence | Special assistance | British Airways](#)
 - [flyingwithoutfear | Virgin Flying Without Fear](#)
 - [Fear of flying course | Fearless Flyer \(easyjet.com\)](#)

Travel insurance and EHIC/GHIC

Comprehensive travel insurance is essential for all travellers, and you should ensure that this provides adequate cover for your current health needs and any planned activities.

The UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) lets you get state healthcare in Europe at a reduced cost or sometimes for free.

If you have a UK European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) it will be valid until the expiry date on the card. Once it expires, you will need to apply for a GHIC to replace it.

For more information and to apply for your card:

[Applying for healthcare cover abroad \(GHIC and EHIC\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-cover-abroad/ghic-and-ehic)

[Apply for a UK Global Health Insurance Card \(GHIC\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-uk-global-health-insurance-card)