

Policy on Medicine Supply for Going Abroad

Travel Abroad

- People travelling within Europe should be advised to carry the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and everyone should obtain adequate holiday travel insurance cover.
- For more detailed advice please refer to NHS Choices:
<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/Healthcareabroad/pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx>
- Guidance for prescribers on risk assessment for travellers and appropriate advice is available at
<https://www.nathnac.org/pro/index.htm>
- Refer to Vaccination in Primary Care Guidelines for vaccines that are available on the NHS for the purpose of travel.
- Compression socks or stockings for prevention of DVT should not be prescribed. Patients should be advised to purchase these products from the local pharmacy.
- GPs are not responsible for prescription of items for conditions which may arise while travelling e.g. travel sickness, diarrhoea. Patients should be advised to purchase items to treat these locally prior to travel. Advice is available from community pharmacies if required.
- For items that are prescription only, patients may be offered and charged for a private prescription e.g. medication for, or needed in case of emergency. The GMS contract allows items for travel to be prescribed privately for patients on the practice NHS list.

Malaria Prophylaxis

- The Department of Health has issued guidance (FHSL (95)7) that medication for malaria prophylaxis may not be reimbursed under the NHS.
- Some medicines for the prevention of malaria are available for purchase “over the counter” at community pharmacies.
- Prescription only medicines for malaria prophylaxis should be prescribed on private prescriptions. When issuing a private prescription, or providing the medication, practices are allowed to charge a fee for either activity but not for both.
- Local community pharmacies have access to up to date advice about appropriate malaria prophylactic regimes and can advise travellers accordingly.
- Patients should be advised to purchase sufficient prophylactic medicines to cover the period of their travel, commencing one week (2-3 weeks for mefloquine so that if adverse events occur there will be time to switch to an alternative) before departure and continuing for at least four weeks on return. Malarone is an exception being started 1-2 days before arrival in a malarial region and stopped one week after leaving.
- The importance of mosquito nets, suitable clothing and insect repellents to protect against being bitten should be stressed. Remember the four steps (ABCD) to prevent suffering from malaria in UK travellers:
 - **A**wareness: know about the risk of malaria
 - **B**ite by mosquitoes: prevent or avoid
 - **C**ompliance with appropriate chemoprophylaxis
 - **D**iagnose breakthrough malaria swiftly and obtain treatment promptly.

Going abroad for less than THREE months

- Medication required for a pre-existing condition should be provided in a sufficient quantity. Most prescriptions will cover holiday periods but if a repeat is due during the trip, the GP may be able to give an early repeat (usually one and no more than three months).
- Where medication requires frequent monitoring (i.e. blood tests, blood pressure etc.), it may not be appropriate for the GP to prescribe for extended periods. Providing a prescription for longer than the normal 28 days' supply is at the GPs discretion.
- Patients may require a letter stating the drug name and condition it is being taken for to prove medicines are for medical use to the patient. This is at the GPs discretion and may be charged for.

Going abroad for more than THREE months and moving abroad permanently

- A GP will only provide the regular repeat prescription of a sufficient quantity (maximum 3 months) in order to get to the destination. It is recommended that GP's provide a maximum of 1 month in most cases.
- Patients should be advised to register with a local doctor for continuing medication (this may need to be paid for by the patient). It is wise for the patient to check with the manufacturer that medicines required are available in the country they are moving to.
- Patients may require a letter stating the drug name and condition it is being taken for to prove medicines are for medical use to the patient. This is at the GPs discretion and may be charged for.

Returning from being abroad for less than THREE months

- Patients will continue to be entitled to receive NHS treatment as before their trip.

Returning permanently from being abroad for more than THREE months

- For the patient to receive NHS treatment for free (where eligible), it is on the basis of someone being 'ordinarily resident'.
- The department of health has issued the following ordinary resident assessment guideline in order to determine if a person is properly settled in the UK in order to establish if they are ordinary resident here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/430967/OR_Tool_1_.pdf

Refer to Guidance on Eligibility for NHS Services for patients from abroad