Health advice for travellers

Find out:

► How to get medical treatment abroad
► How to stay healthy while you’re away
► How to get reduced-cost, sometimes free, medical treatment in Europe
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## Abbreviations used in this booklet

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>Department for Work and Pensions</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<td>EHIC</td>
<td>European Health Insurance Card</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HMRC</td>
<td>HM Revenue and Customs</td>
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<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<td>NI</td>
<td>National Insurance</td>
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<td>PCT</td>
<td>Primary care trust</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>Provisional Replacement Certificate</td>
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The first section of this booklet tells you how to get medical treatment around the world.

In the EU and some other European countries, you can get healthcare at reduced cost or, in some cases, free. There are different rules covering:

- situations where treatment becomes necessary while you are abroad. See pages 5-12 of this booklet, which covers the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Note that you should always take out private health insurance as well as having an EHIC: an EHIC will not necessarily cover all the costs of your treatment, and never covers the cost of repatriation; and

- situations where you want to go abroad in order to get treatment. See pages 13-14 of this booklet, which cover the E112 scheme and other ways of getting healthcare abroad.

The UK also has bilateral agreements with a number of other countries, including many Commonwealth countries and countries in the former Soviet Union. See pages 41-49.

When you travel to most of the rest of the world (including the US, Canada, the Middle East, Asia and Africa), you must make sure you have private health insurance. Page 49 of the booklet covers countries that have no healthcare agreements with the UK.

The second section of the booklet (pages 50-53) provides information on some major diseases. It tells you what you need to think about before you go, and what simple precautions you can take while you’re away.

The third section (pages 54-61) provides general advice on planning for your trip, and staying healthy and avoiding accidents while you’re away.

The last section (pages 62-64) tells you where to go for more information.

**Planning for your trip**

Talk to your GP, practice nurse or travel health clinic about immunisations at least two months before travelling. You can also find out more information by visiting the Immunisation website (www.immunisation.nhs.uk) and the National Travel Health Network and Centre website (www.nathnac.org).

Note: this booklet gives guidance only. It is not a complete and authoritative statement of the law.
Staying safe and healthy abroad

Every year, people living in the UK go on more than 60 million trips abroad. Most of them have safe trips, but some get ill or have an accident and need medical treatment while they’re away. It’s not always easy to get treatment abroad, so you should always make sure you have adequate private health insurance.

The European Health Insurance Card
If you’re going to a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland, you should also make sure you’ve got a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) as well as private health insurance. The card entitles you to reduced-cost, sometimes free, medical treatment in most European countries. Find out more on pages 5–12, including:

- where it is valid;
- what it covers;
- who is eligible; and
- how to apply.
Section 1: Getting medical treatment around the world

This section covers:
• getting treatment in EEA countries and Switzerland (page 5);
• getting treatment in other countries that have reciprocal healthcare agreements with the UK (page 41);
• getting treatment in countries that don’t have healthcare agreements with the UK (page 49).

As well as reading the relevant pages in this booklet, you should talk to your doctor (and travel agent, if you have one) for advice. You can also get information from the tourist office, embassy or high commission of the country you’re visiting about getting medical treatment while you’re there.

Health emergency checklist: getting treatment when you’re abroad
• Make sure you’ve got all the documents you need: your passport, your EHIC (if relevant), evidence of UK residence (eg a driving licence or NHS medical card), and vaccination certificates.
• Check your insurance policy, so you know what your insurers will pay for.
• Contact your travel company representative (if you have one).
• Give the doctor the generic name (not just the brand name) of any medication you’re taking.
• Tell the doctor if you’ve been to any other countries on this trip.
• Keep the names and addresses of a few friends and relatives with your passport so they can be contacted if necessary.
• Contact British Consular officials if you need to get back to the UK quickly. They may be able to arrange this for you—but remember, you will have to pay.
• If you pay for any treatment or drugs and plan to claim on your insurance or get a refund, keep all receipts, special proofs of purchase, price tags and labels.
Getting treatment in EEA countries and Switzerland

This information covers situations where treatment becomes necessary while you are abroad.

The EHIC: free or reduced-cost treatment

The EHIC entitles you to free or reduced-cost medical treatment that becomes necessary while you're visiting an EEA country or Switzerland. The EHIC is valid in:

EU countries:

- Austria
- Belgium
- *Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- *Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden

The EEA: made up of the above EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Switzerland applies the EHIC arrangements through an agreement with the EU.