



Travel Health Advice Leaflet

The following information will help you to stay healthy on your trip. Please make sure you read it following on from your appointment with us.

Water:

Diseases can be caught from drinking contaminated water or swimming in it. Unless you know the water supply is safe where you are staying, only use:

- Boiled water.
- Bottled water or canned drinks.
- Water treated by a sterilising agent.

Swimming:

It is safer to swim in water that is well chlorinated. If you are travelling to Africa, South America or some parts of the Caribbean, avoid swimming in fresh water lakes and streams. You can catch a parasitic disease called schistosomiasis (also known as Bilharzia) from such places. It is sensible to wear protective footwear when on the beach. Other diseases can be caught from sand and soil, particularly wet soil.

Food:

Contaminated food is the most common source of many diseases abroad. You can help prevent illness by following these guidelines for advice on consuming food and beverages:

Category	SAFE	PROBABLY SAFE	UNSAFE
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbonated soft drinks • Carbonated water • Boiled water • Purified water (iodine or chlorine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh citrus juices • Bottled water • Packaged (machine - made ice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap water • Chipped ice • Unpasteurized milk
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot thoroughly grilled, boiled • Processed and packaged • Cooked vegetables and peeled* fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry items • Hyperosmolar items (such as jam and syrup) • Washed vegetables and fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salads • Sauces and 'salsa' • Uncooked seafood • Raw or poorly cooked meats • Unpeeled* fruits • Unpasteurized dairy products • Cold desserts
Setting	Recommended restaurants	Local homes	Street vendors

Reference: Ericsson CD. Prevention of Travelers Diarrhea in: Keystone J, Freedman D, Kozarsky P, Connor B and Nothdurft H. Eds. Travel Medicine 3rd Edition. Saunders, an imprint of Elsevier Inc; 2013. p. 191 -196

* **Peeled** fruits for example bananas: **Unpeeled** fruits for example, raspberries, strawberries.

Personal Hygiene

Many diseases are transmitted by what is known as the 'faecal-oral' route. To help prevent this, always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating and before handling food. Using hand gel is another sensible option.

Travellers' Diarrhoea:

Travellers' diarrhoea is 3 or more loose stools in a 24-hour period, often accompanied by stomach pain, cramps and vomiting. It is caused by eating and/or drinking food and water contaminated by bacteria, viruses or parasites. It usually lasts 2-4 days and whilst it is not a life-threatening illness, it can disrupt your trip. Risk of illness is higher in some countries than others. You can help **prevent** travellers' diarrhoea by following the food, water and personal hygiene guidelines already given.

High risk areas:

- North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, S.E. Asia, South America, Mexico and the Middle East.

Medium risk areas:

- Northern Mediterranean, Canary Islands and the Caribbean Islands.

Low risk areas:

- North America, Western Europe and Australia.

Travel well prepared

A good tip is to take oral rehydration solutions with you. These can be bought over the counter in a chemist (tablet or sachet form) for example: **DIORALYTE, ELECTROLADE or DIORALYTE RELIEF**. Prepare according to instructions. Take care regarding their use in very small children and seek medical advice where necessary.

Anti-diarrhoeal tablets can be used for adults but should NEVER be USED in children under 4 years of age, and only on prescription for children aged 4 to 12 years. Commonly used tablets are loperamide and bismuth subsalicylate - ask your pharmacist for advice about them. **Contact medical help if the affected person has:**

- A temperature.
- Blood in the diarrhoea.
- Diarrhoea for more than 48 hours (or 24 hours in children).
- Becomes confused.

In some circumstances, antibiotics are used as a standby treatment for travellers' diarrhoea. Such medication is not usually available on the NHS in anticipation of you being ill when away and needs to be prescribed. A woman taking the oral contraceptive pill may not have full contraceptive protection if she has had diarrhoea and vomiting. Extra precautions must be used - refer to your 'pill' information leaflet. If using condoms, take a supply of good quality ones with you which are CE approved.

Hepatitis B and HIV infection - these diseases can be transmitted by

- Blood transfusion.
- Medical procedures with non-sterile equipment.
- Sharing of needles (e.g. tattooing, body piercing, acupuncture and drug abuse).
- Sexual contact — Sexually transmitted infections or STIs are also transmitted this way.

Ways to protect yourself

- Only accept a blood transfusion when essential.
- If travelling to a resource poor country, take a sterile medical kit.
- Avoid procedures e.g. ear and body piercing, tattooing & acupuncture.
- Avoid casual sex, especially without using condoms.

Remember! Excessive alcohol can make you carefree and lead you to take risks you otherwise would not consider.

Insect Bites:

Mosquitoes, certain types of flies, ticks and bugs can cause many different diseases, e.g. malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever.

Avoid being bitten by:

- Covering up skin as much as possible if going out at night, (mosquitoes that transmit malaria bite from dusk until dawn). Wear loose fitting clothes, long sleeves, trousers or long skirts.
- Use insect repellents on exposed skin. (DEET containing products are the most effective. A content of up to 50% DEET is recommended for tropical destinations). Clothes can be sprayed with repellents too or clothing specific sprays e.g. permethrin. Check suitability for children on the individual products.
- If room is not air conditioned, but is screened, close shutters early evening and spray room with knockdown insecticide spray. In regions with malaria, if camping, or sleeping in unprotected accommodation, always sleep under a mosquito net (impregnated with permethrin). Avoid camping near areas of stagnant water; these are common breeding areas for mosquitoes etc.
- Electric insecticide vaporisers are very effective as long as there are no power failures!

Malaria:

Malaria is a disease spread by mosquitoes; there is no vaccine yet available. Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease. If you develop flu like symptoms, including fever, sweats, chills, feeling unwell, headaches, muscle pains, cough, and diarrhoea – then seek medical attention immediately. Remember the ABCD of malaria prevention advice:

- A**wareness of the risk.
- B**ite prevention.
- C**hemoprophylaxis (taking the correct tablets).
- D**agnosis (knowing the symptoms and acting quickly).

Animal Bites:

Rabies is present in many parts of the world. Rabies is a serious and sometimes fatal disease.

Follow the three below rules regarding Rabies:

1. Do not touch any animal, even dogs and cats.
2. If you are licked on broken skin, scratched or bitten by an animal in a country which has rabies, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for 10 - 15 minutes, then apply an antiseptic solution if possible e.g. iodine or alcohol. Such precautions also apply if you are licked by the animal, with their saliva coming into contact with your eyes or inside your mouth.
3. Seek medical advice **IMMEDIATELY**, even if you have been immunised, **this is absolutely essential**.

Accidents:

Major leading causes of death in travellers abroad are due to **accidents**, predominantly road traffic accidents and swimming/water accidents. You can help prevent them by following sensible precautions:

- Avoid alcohol and food before swimming.
- Never dive into water where the depth is uncertain.
- Only swim in safe water, check currents, sharks, jellyfish etc.
- Avoid alcohol when driving.
- Avoid hiring motorcycles and mopeds.
- If hiring a car, ensure the tyres, brakes and seat belts are in good condition.

Personal Safety and Security:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provide excellent information about this. They have information for many different types of travel and specific destinations in times of political unrest and natural disasters. Please go to their website for more information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>

Insurance Cover:

- Take out adequate insurance cover for your trip. This should possibly include medical repatriation as without it this service is extremely expensive if needed.
- If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, make sure you inform the insurance company of these details and check the small print of the policy thoroughly.
- If you travel to a European Union country, make sure you have obtained an EHIC card before you travel which takes some time to obtain. Further information about the EHIC is found at <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/Applyingandrenewing.aspx>
- Please note, additional travel insurance is still advised even if you have an EHIC card.

Air Travel:

It is sensible on any long-haul flight to exercise your legs, feet and toes whilst sitting every half an hour or so and to take short walks whenever feasible. Upper body and breathing exercises can further improve circulation. Drink plenty of water and be sensible about alcohol intake which in excess leads to dehydration.

Sun and Heat:

Sunburn and heat-stroke cause serious problems in travellers but in the long term can be a serious cause of skin cancer. The following advice should be taken:

- Increase sun exposure gradually.
- Use sun blocks which contain both UVA and UVB protection and sufficient sun protection factor (SPF) and a minimum of SPF 15. Children under 3 years should have a minimum of SPF 25 and babies under 6 months should be kept out of the sun at all times. Reapply often and always after swimming and washing. Read manufacturer instructions.
- Always apply sunscreen first followed by an insect repellent spray on top.
- Wear protective clothing – sunhats, T shirts and sunglasses etc.
- Take special care of children and those with pale skin/red hair.
- Drink extra fluids in a hot climate – be aware alcohol can make you dehydrated.

Useful websites for more information:

Name/description	Web address
Fit for travel – NHS public travel site for general advice on all aspects of travel and country specific information, including malaria maps.	www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
NaTHNaC – National Travel Health Network and Centre England based, with similar information to above.	http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/
NHS Choices – look at travel health in the ‘A-Z’ section and travel health in the ‘Live Well’ section (these are both different). Excellent general website also.	www.nhs.uk
FCO – Foreign & Commonwealth Office, especially useful for safety and security and specific pages for types of travellers, e.g. gap year, responsible tourism. Also look at ‘Our Publications’.	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office
Sunsmart – Cancer research website providing information about skin cancer and sun protection advice.	www.sunsmart.org.uk
Travel health products to take away with you – these are just a small selection of many resources available. Please note Linden Medical Group is not endorsing such items, merely providing information.	www.lifesystems.co.uk www.nomadtravel.co.uk www.safariquip.co.uk www.travelpharm.com
Medex – Useful advice booklet on ‘travelling at high altitude’.	www.medex.org.uk
Medic Alert [®] - life-saving identification system for individuals with hidden medical conditions and allergies.	www.medicalert.org.uk
Diabetes UK – information specific for those with diabetes who wish to travel	www.diabetes.org.uk
Global travel clinic locator from the International Society of Travel Medicine.	www.istm.org
IAMAT – International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT).	www.iamat.org/doctors_clinics.cfm
Google translate – Free online translation service.	http://translate.google.com

Have a good, but safe and healthy trip!