

## Medicines Optimisation Position Statement

Position Statement	<b>Prescribing Guidance for Patients Travelling Abroad</b>
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### Travel Advice

NHS patients are entitled to receive travel advice including advice on recommended immunisations and malaria prophylaxis free of charge. This is classed as an essential service within the General Medical Services contract. Practices should ensure that when travel advice is given it is current and based on expertly sourced information.

### Travelling abroad for three months or less

If the NHS patient is planning to return to the UK from abroad within three months of leaving, the usual prescription quantity (no more than three months) may be issued, providing it is clinically appropriate. At the discretion of the clinician, drugs that require frequent monitoring may not be prescribed or length of supply may be limited due to safety concerns.

### Living or travelling abroad for more than three months

Patients travelling abroad for more than three months will be prescribed sufficient medication (usually 1 month) to enable them to make alternative arrangements at their destination. Patients are advised to check with the manufacturer that their medicines are available in the country being visited.

### Just in case treatments

Prescribing or providing medicines or appliances on NHS prescription, which a patient requires solely in anticipation of the onset of an ailment or occurrence of an injury while outside the UK but for which the person is not requiring treatment when the medicine is prescribed is not allowed.

Examples include prescribing for “jet lag”, “fear of flying”, sunscreens, prevention or treatment of altitude sickness, travel sickness and diarrhoea. Compression stockings, LMWH and DOACs should not be prescribed by practices on NHS prescription specifically for the purpose of preventing deep vein thrombosis on long haul flights. These requests maybe treated as a private transaction or if applicable, patients should be advised to consult a private travel service or to buy items locally prior to travel. Due to the risk of inappropriate use and increasing antibiotic resistance, prophylactic antibiotics should not be prescribed (even on a private prescription) if there is no confirmed diagnosis. Emergency travel kits are not available on the NHS.

## **Postponement of menstruation for non-clinical reasons such as sports, travel, holidays.**

For people already prescribed a [combined contraceptive pill](#), the NHS advises that two packs taken back to back can be used to delay a period.

If a patient over 18 years is not already prescribed a combined contraceptive pill and wishes to postpone their period, GP practices within Frimley ICB do not offer an alternative at NHS expense. People should search online using 'delay period pill', to have a counselling session with a pharmacist and if suitable for this service, order the medication privately from them. People under 18 years should continue to consult their GP.

## **Taking and Sending Medication overseas**

The Home Office website provides travel advice for patients by individual country. It is the responsibility of each patient to check with the embassy, consulate, or high commission of the country of destination (or any country through which they may be travelling) before travelling with medication. Drug classification, restrictions, controlled drugs regulation, and requirements such as border declaration vary considerably between destinations. If a written authority is required, GP practices may charge for this service.

Under legislation, the NHS's duty of care regarding prescribing ends when a patient has been absent or intends to be away from the United Kingdom for a period of more than 3 months. An NHS prescription must not be issued for patients who are already abroad, and medication supplied on NHS prescription should not be posted to people living overseas, whether temporarily or permanent.

Patients travelling abroad for less than 3 months and carrying less than 3 months' supply of controlled drugs do not require a personal import or export licence to enter or leave the United Kingdom. However, the Home Office does recommend that patients carry a letter issued by the prescribing doctor or drug worker. Practices may charge for this service.

## **Travel immunisations**

The GP contract includes the provision of vaccines and immunisations as an additional service. Certain travel vaccinations can be provided free for travel use. Others attract a private charge. Travel vaccines that are available via the NHS for which reimbursement is received are:

- Cholera
- Diphtheria/Tetanus/Polio
- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid

These vaccinations should continue to be recommended for travel, but the individual traveller will need to bear the cost of the vaccination. They should not be prescribed on the NHS exclusively for the purposes of travel.

- Hepatitis B
- Japanese Encephalitis
- Meningitis ACWY
- Yellow Fever
- Tick-borne encephalitis
- Rabies
- BCG

General information on immunisation, vaccine safety and individual diseases is available in 'The

Green Book': GOV UK: Immunisations against infectious diseases.

### **Malaria prophylaxis**

- Patients should be advised about the importance of the prevention of malaria.
- GPs must not prescribe medication for malaria prophylaxis on NHS prescription.
- Prescription only medicines for malaria prophylaxis should be prescribed on private prescription. Practices may charge for the provision of a private prescription.
- Some medicines for the prevention of malaria are classed a Pharmacy 'P' medicine and available for purchase 'over the counter' at community pharmacies. Local community pharmacies have access to up to date advice about appropriate prophylactic regimens and can advise travellers' accordingly.

### **Useful References**

- Department of Health. The National Health Service Standard General Medical Services Contract. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-general-medical-services-contract>
- The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC): [www.nathnac.org](http://www.nathnac.org)
- Travel health Pro: [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk)
- The Home Office website provides travel advice for patients by individual country. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.
- UK Border Agency: Travelling with controlled drugs: <https://www.gov.uk/travelling-controlled-drugs>
- Home Office. Controlled drugs: licences, fees and returns. March 2013. Available via [Drugs licensing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlled-drugs-licences-fees-and-returns)
- Gov.UK: Embassies in the UK: Importing controlled drugs <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/contact-an-embassy>
- 'The Green Book'. GOV UK: Immunisations against infectious diseases Immunisation against infectious disease - GOV.UK [Immunity against infectious disease - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immunisation-against-infectious-disease)
- Can I take my Medicines Abroad? <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/1074.aspx> 3.
- NHS choices: Healthcare abroad: <http://www.nhs.uk/nhsEngland/Healthcareabroad/pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx>
- NHS choices: Moving abroad, planning your healthcare: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/movingabroad/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- NHS Choices: Malaria prevention: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Malaria/Pages/Prevention.aspx>
- NICE CKS: DVT prevention for travellers: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/dvt-prevention-for-travellers#!topicsummary>