



UK Health
Security
Agency



Large print version

Travelling abroad to visit friends and relatives

Advice for travellers



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Advice for travellers

Information from the UK Health Security Agency and the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC).

Prepare ahead to reduce potential health risks abroad, even if visiting friends and relatives.

You may be at risk of diseases spread by mosquitoes or animals, such as dengue, Zika and rabies and infections spread by contaminated food and drink, like typhoid and travellers' diarrhoea.

Check if you need vaccines or antimalarial tablets before you go.

Follow good food and water hygiene rules and avoid eating or handling bush meat.

You are not naturally protected against diseases like malaria or typhoid even if you grew up, lived in or regularly visit risk countries.

Most UK malaria and typhoid cases are reported in people who travelled to countries they visit frequently or used to live in.

What should I do before travelling?

Check health risks for your destinations and how to reduce them using the **NaTHNaC** country information pages at: **www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries**

Even if you have visited or lived in a country before, you will not have the same protection against infections as local people and are still at risk.

See your GP, practice nurse, pharmacist or travel clinic 4-6 weeks before travel for individual advice, travel vaccines and malaria prevention, if relevant for your destination.

You should also check that your routine childhood vaccines are in date, you have good supplies of any medicines and get valid travel insurance for the whole of your trip.

If you already have health problems, are pregnant or trying to get pregnant you may need additional health advice or antimalarial tablets for certain countries.

Remember

It is never too late to get travel advice before you go; many travel clinics and pharmacies offer last minute appointments.

What should I do while I am abroad?

If visiting areas with insects that spread disease like malaria or dengue, make sure you use insect repellent, cover exposed skin and sleep under an insecticide-treated bed net if you are not staying in air-conditioned accommodation.

If you have been prescribed antimalarial tablets, follow all instructions carefully (including starting before travel) and remember to complete the course when you are back in the UK.

Diseases spread by contaminated food and drinks are more common in countries with lower food hygiene standards, basic toilet and washing facilities and poor access to clean water.

Wash your hands frequently, especially before preparing food, eating or drinking and after using the toilet.

Avian flu is a risk worldwide; avoid all contact with birds (alive or dead) including pets, domestic poultry and wild birds. Stay away from live bird/animal markets and poultry farms when possible and avoid eating undercooked poultry.

Rabies is a serious illness and can be fatal if treatment is not given rapidly. You may be at risk if you come into contact with saliva from an infected animal through a bite, scratch or lick on broken skin.

All animals, including cats, dogs, monkeys and bats, can carry rabies, so avoid contact with wild and domestic animals where possible. After an animal bite, scratch or lick on broken skin: wash the area thoroughly with soap and water, and seek medical attention locally. You may be advised to start rabies post-exposure treatment, but always contact your GP on return to the UK to complete any treatment required.

What should I do if I feel unwell?

If you have symptoms like fever (38°C or more), flu-like illness, a rash or persistent and/or bloody diarrhoea during or after travel you must get medical help locally.

Do not wait until you come back to the UK if you are ill abroad, see a doctor or attend a clinic.

Remember to tell your doctor about any trips abroad you have taken in the past year.

If you visited a malaria risk area, you must seek immediate medical care if you develop a fever of 38°C or above (or any other symptoms that could be malaria) within a year of your trip.

Further information

For general advice for travellers and advice for visiting friends and relatives visit the following **NaTHNaC** websites:

General advice for travellers visit:

www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/30/general-advice-for-travellers

Advice for visiting friends and relatives visit:

www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/91/travelling-to-visit-friends-and-relatives

This large print leaflet and a standard version is also available in Arabic, Bengali, French, Gujarati, Hausa, Igbo, Punjabi, Spanish, Swahili, Yoruba, Urdu, Xhosa and in BSL, audio, braille and Easy Read.

The leaflet can be ordered or downloaded from:
www.healthpublications.gov.uk, by calling:
0300 123 1002 or by textphone: **0300 123 1003**
(lines are open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday).

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