

# Health Advice for Adults Travelling Abroad

## **Preparing for your health before travelling**

If you are planning to travel outside the UK, it is important to consider your health before you go. Different destinations may present different health risks, and some preparations need time to be effective.

Travel health advice and vaccinations should be arranged well in advance of travel. Some vaccines take time to provide protection, and others may require more than one dose.

While healthcare professionals can provide guidance, you play an important role in managing your health while abroad. Being well prepared can help reduce risks and allow you to travel with greater confidence.

## **Vaccinations and health advice before travelling**

Vaccinations are an important part of travel preparation, as they can help protect against infections that may be more common in certain parts of the world. The advice you receive will depend on your individual travel plans.

Factors that may influence travel health advice include:

- Your destination
- The length of your stay
- Planned activities and accommodation
- Your medical history and vaccination record

A healthcare professional can review your situation and advise whether additional protection may be appropriate.

## **Routine UK vaccinations and boosters**

Before travelling, it is recommended that adults are up to date with routine UK vaccinations. These provide protection against infections that still occur worldwide and may be more common in some regions.

Routine protection commonly includes vaccinations against:

- Tetanus
- Diphtheria
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)

If you are unsure about your vaccination history, a healthcare professional can review your records and advise whether boosters or catch-up doses may be needed.

## **Vaccinations and services are not provided locally**

Not all travel-related vaccinations or services are provided by every GP practice. Some vaccines are only available through specialist travel clinics.

If a vaccination or service is not offered locally, you may be advised to contact a travel clinic. These clinics can provide a wider range of vaccinations and destination-specific advice.

If vaccinations or medications need to be arranged privately, it is your responsibility to organise these before travel. Charges may apply, so allowing enough time before departure is important.

## **Protecting yourself from insects and mosquito bites**

In some parts of the world, insects such as mosquitoes and ticks can spread infection. The level of risk depends on your destination, the season, and your activities.

Steps that may help reduce the risk of bites include:

- Covering exposed skin where possible
- Using appropriate insect repellents
- Staying in accommodation with screens or air conditioning

A healthcare professional or travel clinic can advise whether additional precautions may be recommended for your destination.

### **COVID-19 and travelling abroad**

Most people travel without health issues, but staying informed about current requirements is important.

COVID-19 travel rules may differ between countries and can change at short notice. Entry requirements, vaccination rules, and documentation are set by the destination country.

Before travelling, it is important to check:

- Entry and border requirements
- Any vaccination or documentation needed
- Current travel health advice

Official government travel websites provide the most up-to-date information. COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters are arranged through national vaccination services rather than travel clinics.

### **Sexual health, Zika virus, and pregnancy considerations**

When travelling abroad, it is important to be aware of the sexual health risks that may be higher in some regions. Practising safer sex can help reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections.

Zika virus is mainly spread through mosquito bites and, in some cases, through sexual contact. Many people experience mild or no symptoms, but an infection during pregnancy can cause serious complications.

If you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy, or undergoing fertility treatment, it is important to check the current advice for your destination. If you have concerns before or after travel, seek advice from your GP, midwife, or obstetrician.

### **General health and safety risks while travelling**

Travelling abroad may involve health and safety risks that are not related to infection. These risks vary depending on local conditions, activities, and environments.

Examples include:

- Road traffic accidents
- Illness related to food or water
- Heat- or cold-related illness
- Environmental or altitude-related health issues
- Insect or tick exposure

Taking sensible precautions and following local safety advice can help reduce these risks.

### **Finding reliable travel health information**

Travel health advice can change over time, so it is important to use reliable and up-to-date sources when planning your trip.

Trusted health and government websites provide guidance on vaccinations, health risks, and safety advice. If you are unsure how the advice applies to you, a healthcare professional can help explain it.

### **Getting personalised travel health advice**

If you are planning complex travel, a long stay, or have existing medical conditions, seeking advice well in advance is recommended.

A healthcare professional or travel clinic can help review your individual circumstances and provide appropriate guidance before you travel.