

Wirral CCG - TRAVEL POLICY

1. Travelling Abroad

If a person is going to be abroad for more than 3 months then all they are entitled to at NHS expense is a sufficient supply of regular medications for pre-existing conditions, to get to their destination and find an alternative supply of that medication ^(1, 2) Patients should check on arrangements for obtaining prescribed medicines in the country they intend to visit before leaving the UK ⁽¹⁾.

The General Practitioners Committee. Information and Guidance on prescribing in General Practice, September 2004 document ⁽²⁾ states that the NHS accepts responsibility for supplying on-going medication for temporary periods abroad of up to three months. This is for pre-existing medical conditions, for which treatment is being provided prior to the date of travel.

There is no explicit time limit on prescriptions for patients travelling abroad⁽³⁾, but as patients would normally be removed from a GPs list if absent for 3 months or more⁽²⁾, it is expected that prescriptions would not exceed 3 months. When doctors prescribe a drug, they are clinically and legally responsible for any results of that decision to prescribe. In view of this, it would not be considered good clinical practice for a doctor to prescribe large amounts of drugs to a patient going abroad for an extended period of time, whose progress that GP is not able to monitor ⁽²⁾.

Less medication may be prescribed depending on the GPs clinical judgement as no more medicine than is clinically appropriate should be provided to a patient. Issuing shorter prescriptions gives the doctor the opportunity to review on-going medication, which is important for some groups of patients especially for drugs which require monitoring. There may be safety and waste considerations associated with storing or transporting large quantities of a particular drug for the patient.

For visits longer than three months a patient should be advised to register with a local doctor for continuing medication ⁽³⁾. It may be helpful to provide the patient with a list of current medications and a summary of the patient's relevant medical history. Some prescription only medicines in the UK may be available from a community pharmacy in the destination country.

- 1.1 GPs are not responsible under their terms of service for prescribing items for a condition that might arise whilst travelling abroad e.g. diarrhoea or travel sickness ⁽³⁾
- 1.2 NHS patients can be charged for prescribing or providing drugs, medicines or appliances (including a collection of such drugs, medicines or appliances in the

form of a travel kit) which a patient requires to have in his possession solely in anticipation of the onset of an ailment or occurrence of an injury while he is outside the United Kingdom but for which he is not requiring treatment when the medicine is prescribed (schedule 5 regulation 24) ⁽¹⁾. Patients should be advised to obtain these medicines from community pharmacies prior to travel or to obtain a private prescription for prescription only medicines. This includes travel kits.

Patients should be advised that before travelling, it is sensible to check the medication regulations for the countries to which they are travelling with the relevant authorities. ⁽³⁾ (Home Office and embassies of the destination country/countries). This is especially important if intending to travel with a controlled drug. It is also wise to check with the manufacturer that the medicines required are available in the country being visited.

2. Travel vaccinations

The following immunisations for travel are part of additional services under General Medical Services (GMS) and Personal Medical Services (PMS). **Patients should not be charged a fee for these specific travel vaccinations if the service is provided to registered patients. Practices can opt out of this provision and refer patients to a travel clinic:** ^(5, 6, 8)

Hepatitis A (first and second/booster dose)
Typhoid
Combined hepatitis A and typhoid <i>(Note: separate vaccinations are cheaper and more appropriate as they have different booster dosage schedules.⁴)</i>
Tetanus, diphtheria and polio combined vaccine
Cholera

2.1 Reimbursement - one of two ways;

- Purchased by the practice and personally administered payment claimed through FP34PD **or**
- Obtained by the patient on FP10 prescription. A prescription charge is payable to the pharmacy unless the patient is exempt. In this situation no claim for personal administration fees should be made through FP34PD.

2.2 Travel vaccinations that cannot be given as an NHS service

Hepatitis B (single agent)
Meningitis ACWY
Yellow Fever
Japanese B encephalitis

Tick- borne encephalitis
Rabies

- Practices may therefore charge a registered patient for the immunisation if requested for travel.
- The patient may be given a private prescription to obtain the vaccines or they may be charged for stock purchased and held by the practice.
- Practices should provide written information on the immunisation schedule proposed and the charges invoiced at the outset.
- An FP10 must not be used to provide these services.

There is some ambiguity over the combined hepatitis A and B vaccination. Although the combination is prescribable on an NHS prescription because it contains hepatitis A. Hepatitis B is not commissioned by the NHS as a travel vaccine, so prescribers are not obliged to give the combination product as a travel vaccine on the NHS. Patients requiring both vaccines for travel purposes should receive hepatitis B privately and hepatitis A alone can be prescribed on an FP10

2.3 Charges

For travel vaccines not available on the NHS a charge may be levied for;

- The vaccine
- Administration of the vaccine
- Writing the private prescription
- Post vaccination serological testing in the case of hepatitis B administration, if performed for travel reasons.
- Provision of certification of immunisation
- *The level of charges should be determined by the practice; it might be advisable to have a practice leaflet for patients which set out these charges^(5,8)

Private provision

*The ambiguity regarding when to supply travel vaccines under the NHS or privately, stems from the regulations regarding the charging of patients that are registered with the practice. Schedule 5 of the NHS regulations leaves the decision as to whether the practice levies a charge or not to the discretion of the practice⁽⁵⁾. The regulations do not impose any circumstances or conditions as to when these immunisations should be given on the NHS or as a private service. Practices have to ensure that their policy is non-

discriminatory and that it is not contrary to the Equality Act 2010 (formerly the Disability Discrimination Act).⁽⁹⁾

3. Malaria prophylaxis

The Department of Health issued guidance in February 1995 (FHSL (95)7)⁽¹⁰⁾ which is still current. This guidance states Medicines for Malaria prophylaxis should **not** be prescribed on an NHS prescription. Patients should be advised to purchase antimalarials such as chloroquine and proguanil from a pharmacy, where it often costs less than the prescription charge in England.

Prescription only medicines for malaria prophylaxis such as doxycycline, mefloquine and Malarone®(proguanil/atovaquone) must be prescribed on a private prescription. A consultation fee may be charged at the GP's discretion.

The NHS (General Medical Services) Regulations 2004 state that a GP may accept a fee for prescribing or providing drugs or medicines for malaria chemoprophylaxis^(1, 10).

Patients should be advised to purchase or obtain sufficient prophylactic medicines to cover the period of travel, taking into account that anti-malarial drugs are commenced prior to travel, are taken whilst away and continued on return from travel (see BNF for prophylactic regimes for individual drugs).⁽⁷⁾

Patients should be advised about the importance of mosquito nets, suitable clothing and insect repellents such as DEET, to protect against being bitten.

GPs may still use FP10s to prescribe anti-malarial drugs to patients in the UK who need those drugs for other conditions e.g. gout.

A number of specialist centres are able to provide advice:-

National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNac) provides travel health information for health professionals (0845 602 6712) and the public:
www.nathnac.org

Fit for Travel provides travel health information for people travelling abroad from the UK: www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice.aspx

Travel Medicine Team, Health Protection Scotland (registered users of Travax only)
www.travax.nhs.uk (for registered users of the NHS Travax website only) (0141) 300 1100 (weekdays 2–4 p.m. only)

Liverpool School of Tropical medicine (0151) 705 3100

PHE (Public Health England) Malaria Reference Laboratory (020) 7637 0248 (fax)
(prophylaxis only) www.malaria-reference.co.uk

Travel clinic services in the Wirral area, are available to the public at certain NHS Medical Centres & through private companies.

REFERENCES

1. The National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/196/pdfs/ukxi_20150196_en.pdf. (Last update 2015) & NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/movingabroad/Pages/Introduction.aspx>(accessed 15th March 2016)
2. General Practitioners Committee. Information and Guidance on Prescribing in General Practice, September 2004 .Updated May 2013
3. NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1755.aspx> ‘Can my GP prescribe extra medicines to cover my holiday?’ and ‘Can I take my medicines abroad?’ Accessed 15th March 2016
4. Prescipp; Travel vaccinations DROP List;- <https://www.prescipp.info/-travel-vaccines/finish/263-travel-vaccines-drop-list/1474-bulletin-74-travel-vaccines-drop-list>
5. British Medical Association: Focus on travel immunisations, Nov 2012
6. Department of Health: The Green Book, Sept 2014
7. Joint Formulary Committee. British National Formulary (online) London: BMJ Group and Pharmaceutical Press: September 2016:- <http://www.medicinescomplete.com>Accessed 15th March 2016
8. GMS Regulations (Schedule 2, paragraph 4 and Schedule 5, paragraph 1 (g)) 1st March 2004 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/291/schedule/2/made> Accessed 15th March 2016
9. Equality Act 27th February 2013 <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance> accessed 15th March 2016
10. NHS Executive. FHSL (95) 7. Malaria Prophylaxis: Regulation permitting GPs to charge for prescribing or providing anti-malarial drugs. February 1995.
11. www.bma.org.uk:- information and guidance on prescribing in general practice May 2013

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation lies with Wirral CCG and individual GP practices.

ROUTE FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RATIFICATION

All prescribing policies are underpinned by detailed clinical evidence reviews. Draft policies are subject to consultation at local clinical meetings with Medical Directors, GPs and pharmacists. The final policies are ratified at the Professional Executive Committee and published on the Wirral Medicines Management Team website.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Document name	Travel Policy
Category of Document in The Policy Schedule	Commissioning Policy
Author(s) Contact(s) for further information about this document	Updated by Lynne Sahlman, Medicines Management Pharmacist Medicines Management Team Telephone: 0151 643 5338 Email: mlcsu.medsmanagementwirral@nhs.net
This document should be read in conjunction with	Prescribing Policy: Travelling abroad
Published by	Wirral CCG Old Market House Hamilton Street Birkenhead CH41 5AL
If you have any concerns please contact us on	Telephone: 0151 651 0011 Email: WICCG.intouch@nhs.net
Copies of this document are available from	Website: http://mm.wirral.nhs.uk Hard copies from the Wirral Medicines Management Team

VERSION CONTROL

Version History:		
Version Number	Reviewing Committee / Officer	Date
1.0	Primary Care Prescribing Committee	1 st Sept 2010
1.1	Professional Executive Committee	21 st Sept

		2010
1.2	Medicines Management Committee	21 st March 2017

The following terms are used in this document

British National Formulary (BNF)	The BNF provides prescribers, pharmacists and other health care professionals e.g. nurses with up to date information about medicines prescribed in the UK
The National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004	These regulations set out the framework for General Medical Services (GMS) contracts i.e. the services your GP provides.
Prophylaxis	Prevention

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