
Position Statement

Prescribing for Clinical Need: Holiday Medication

Summary

Under NHS legislation, the NHS ceases to have responsibility for people when they leave the UK. However, to ensure continuity of care for patients on a stable medication regimen it is reasonable to provide a routine repeat prescription usually for one but **no more than three months**.

To ensure good patient care the following guidance is offered:

GPs are not responsible for prescribing items required for conditions which may arise while travelling e.g. travel sickness, and diarrhoea. Patients should be advised to purchase these items locally prior to travel. For prophylactic Prescription Only Medicines (POM) requests, patients may be offered and charged for a private prescription, e.g. ciprofloxacin for traveller's diarrhoea and norethisterone to alter a menstrual cycle whilst on holiday.

Where a patient requires a prescription for larger supplies of his/her medication because of a longer stay abroad, the patient can be given a private prescription to cover the additional period of absence.

Countries have different rules and regulations about the types and quantity of medicine they allow to be taken into the country. Patients should check the rules for all the countries they are going to, **including countries that they are just passing through**. The [Government's travel advice website](#) has a full list of foreign embassies in the UK with whom the patients can make contact.

Patients entering or leaving the UK for **3 months or more** with personal medication containing a controlled drug must get a licence. Online applications must be made on the [Home Office website](#) at least 10 working days before travel date. Travel arrangements should not be made until the licence has been received.

Patients entering or leaving the UK for **less than 3 months** do not need a licence but should have a letter from their doctor with the following information: «Patient's name» «Patient's travel itinerary» «A list of prescribed controlled drugs being carried and dosages and total amounts for each drug».

Medicines for the prevention of malaria, with the exception of Malarone®, mefloquine and doxycycline, are available for purchase 'over the counter' at community pharmacies. Malarone®, mefloquine and doxycycline are prescription only medicines (POM) and should be prescribed on private prescription. Local community pharmacies have access to up to date advice about appropriate prophylactic regimens and can advise travellers accordingly.

Useful links and websites

<http://www.lancsmmg.nhs.uk/download/guidelines/Primary-Care-Good-Prescribing-Guide-Version-2.1.pdf>

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>

<http://www.who.int/ith/en/>

<http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>

<http://nathnac.net/#/>

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May 2018