

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

TRAVEL AND CANCER



In partnership with



ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS AND
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

TRAVEL MEDICINE

About this booklet

This booklet is about travelling if you are affected by cancer. It is for anyone planning a trip abroad. There is also information for family, friends and carers.

The booklet talks about the benefits of travel. It also explains how cancer and treatment may affect your trip. There are tips on:

- planning ahead
- finding travel insurance
- taking medicines abroad
- looking after yourself while you are away.

This booklet does not have information about going abroad for treatment. We have information about this on our website. Visit [macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support)

How to use this booklet

This booklet is split into sections to help you find what you need. You do not have to read it from start to finish. You can use the contents list on page 3 to help you.

It is fine to skip parts of the booklet. You can always come back to them when you feel ready.

On pages 120 to 124, there are details of other organisations that can help.

If you find this booklet helpful, you could pass it on to your family and friends. They may also want information to help them support you.

Quotes

In this booklet, we have included quotes from people who have travelled with cancer. These people have chosen to share their story with us. To share your experience, visit [macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/shareyourstory)

For more information

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm, or visit [macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk)

If you would prefer to speak to us in another language, interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you want to use.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call us using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app.

We have some information in different languages and formats, including audio, eBooks, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these, visit [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats) or call **0808 808 00 00**.

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The benefits of travel

Travel can have many benefits if you are affected by cancer. It may:

- help you feel more relaxed and positive
- allow you to spend more time with your family and friends
- help you become more active, which has a lot of benefits for your health.

A holiday is a chance to rest your body and mind. If you are caring for someone with cancer, you may need a break from caring.

You may want to travel for spiritual or religious reasons. During your trip, you might want to think about what you have been through. You can talk to other people affected by cancer about travelling or write your own travel blog on our Online Community (see page 118).

We also have a video about travelling after being diagnosed with cancer. To watch this video, visit [macmillan.org.uk/travel](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/travel)

‘Shortly after I recovered from the operation, I went on pre-booked holidays to Amsterdam, Greece, and Brussels before starting some treatment. I did not want to miss out on any opportunity to experience travel, but I had to juggle my time with hospital appointments and work.’

Jolene

How cancer and treatment can affect travel

Many people who have cancer can travel without problems. For others, cancer or its treatment may make travelling more difficult. How cancer affects your travels depends on different things. These include the type of cancer you have and how it is treated.

Here are some of the things you may need to think about:

- Cancer and treatment can cause symptoms or side effects (see pages 9 to 17). These can make it more difficult to travel or cause problems while you are away.
- You may need to take medicines or medical equipment with you (see pages 63 to 73).
- Travel insurance is generally more expensive for people who have cancer (see pages 31 to 49).
- You may need a fitness to fly certificate from your doctor to meet an airline's requirements (see pages 52 to 57).

'I was initially very scared and reluctant to go on any holiday, UK or abroad, as I would be away from my 'comfort blanket' of the hospital and my GP. However, I have now visited Ireland, Spain and France plus numerous weekends away in the UK.'

Grant

Planning ahead can help you avoid problems. It is important to speak to your doctor, specialist nurse or a travel health professional before you make any plans. They can tell you whether travelling may be unsafe or explain how to prepare and what precautions to take (see pages 22 to 23).

If you are still having treatment, your healthcare team may be able to help you plan a safer trip. For example, it may be possible to change your treatment dates or to arrange a break in your treatment.

We have more information about the different types of cancer and cancer treatments (see page 116).



Side effects and travel

Cancer symptoms or the side effects of treatment may affect your travel. Knowing how to manage these can help make your trip safer and more enjoyable.

Fatigue (tiredness)

Fatigue is a feeling of tiredness or exhaustion. It is a common side effect of cancer treatment.

Fatigue can sometimes continue for months after treatment finishes. For some people, it may be an ongoing symptom of the cancer.

Fatigue does not have to stop you travelling. But it is important to think about how much activity you can manage and how to pace yourself. Try not to do too many things and make sure you rest between activities.

You can arrange help at airports, train stations and on ships. For example, you could arrange to have a wheelchair, so you do not need to walk as much (see pages 51 to 61).

If you have a long flight across different time zones, your normal sleep pattern may be affected. This is called jet lag and can make you feel even more tired. There is no treatment for jet lag. It should improve in a few days as your body adjusts.

For more information about jet lag and tips on how to reduce the problem, visit [nhs.uk/conditions/jet-lag](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/jet-lag)

Infection risk

Different cancer treatments can increase your risk of infection. These include:

- chemotherapy drugs, which destroy cancer cells
- some targeted therapy drugs, which target something in or around a cancer cell that is encouraging it to grow
- some immunotherapy drugs, which use the immune system to attack cancer cells.

If you are thinking about travelling during treatment, talk to your cancer doctor, specialist nurse or a travel health professional. They will advise you if and when it is safe to travel.

Your risk of getting an infection is higher at certain times. Most people have a lower risk a few weeks after finishing their treatment. But if you have had high-dose chemotherapy for a stem cell or a bone marrow transplant, you are at risk of infection for longer. After the first year, your immune system should be working well and you can usually travel abroad. But always check with your doctor first. You can read more about this in our booklets about stem cell transplants (see page 116).

The risk of getting an infection also depends on where you plan to travel. If you are planning to travel to other parts of the world, ask your cancer doctor for advice about vaccinations. Some vaccinations can help protect you from infections in other parts of the world (see pages 24 to 27).

If you are travelling while you are still at risk of getting an infection, your doctor may advise you to take antibiotics with you. Always follow the advice you have been given to reduce your risk of an infection.

The following things can help reduce your risk:

- Wash your hands regularly, especially before eating.
- Be careful about the foods you eat (see pages 77 to 79).
- Try to prevent insect bites, especially if you have or are at risk of lymphoedema (swelling of a part of the body) – see page 82.
- Take anti-malarial tablets, if you are travelling to a country where malaria (a disease caused by mosquitos) is common (see pages 104 to 105).

Always see a doctor straight away if you think you may have an infection.

Being more sensitive to the sun

Radiotherapy (treatment using high-energy x-rays) and many cancer drugs can make your skin more sensitive to the sun.

It is important to protect your skin by using a sun cream with both a:

- high sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30
- 4 or 5-star UVA protection rating.

The SPF and UVA rating measure how well the sun cream will protect you from the sun's rays, which can cause skin cancer. When you are in the sun, you can also protect yourself by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and suitable clothing to cover up.

You should stay out of sun during the hottest part of the day. This is usually between 11am and 3pm. Try to sit in the shade, even at other times of the day. We have more information about taking care in the sun (see pages 83 to 85).

Long-term effects of treatment

Some cancer treatments can cause long-term effects. These may be side effects that do not go away after a few months or that start months or years after treatment finishes.

Long-term effects of cancer treatment can include the following:

- Lymphoedema (swelling of a part of the body) caused by surgery or radiotherapy to the lymph nodes (glands).
- Changes to how your bowel or bladder works because of radiotherapy to the pelvis, or surgery to the bowel or bladder.

If you have lymphoedema, you may worry about managing it when you travel, or whether travel will make it worse.

If you are at risk of lymphoedema, you may worry about developing it when you travel.

There is lots of advice available on managing lymphoedema and reducing the risk of it developing. For example, you can help manage lymphoedema by avoiding getting sunburnt, as this can increase the swelling. Before you travel, you can also ask your lymphoedema nurse about taking antibiotics with you when you go abroad. This means that if you get an infection, you can start taking them straight away.

If you have bowel or bladder changes, there are things you can do to make sure you are prepared while you are away (see pages 110 to 111). These include packing anti-diarrhoea tablets or any pads and supplies you need. You can also ask for a seat near a toilet on a plane.

We have more information about travelling if you have a long-term effect of cancer treatment (see pages 97 to 113).

If you have had surgery

If you have recently had surgery, your doctor will advise you whether it is safe to travel, or how long you should wait. They can also tell you if there is a type of travel you should avoid.

After some operations, you are advised not to fly for a while. This may happen if you have had surgery to the brain, eye, chest or bowel. This is because surgery to these areas may introduce air into the body. Flying can also increase air pressure and cause pain or stretch a wound. It is important to follow your doctor's advice (see pages 54 to 57).

You may want to check with the airline before you book. They have their own rules about flying after surgery. You may need your doctor to provide a fitness to fly certificate (see pages 52 to 53).

If you have recently had surgery, you are more at risk of a blood clot (see pages 16 to 17). You may have to delay your travel for a few weeks and follow advice to reduce this risk.

Having a breast removed (mastectomy) does not stop you from travelling. Organisations such as Breast Cancer Now have information about suitable holiday wear, such as swimsuits. Visit their website at breastcancer.org

If you have had your spleen removed

If your spleen has been removed (splenectomy), you may be more likely to get some types of infection (see page 106). You need to take certain precautions, especially if you are travelling to an area where there is a risk of malaria.

Malaria is a serious disease spread by mosquitos (see pages 104 to 105). It can be particularly severe if your spleen has been removed. Malaria is mainly found in tropical countries, such as parts of Africa, Asia and Central and South America. Information and maps about malaria risk are available at:

- travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries if you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations if you live in Scotland.

If you have a stoma

A stoma is an opening in the body. A tracheostomy, urostomy, colostomy and ileostomy are all types of stoma. Having a stoma does not stop you from travelling, but you need to prepare carefully for your trip (see pages 107 to 109).

Ask your stoma care nurse for information about getting travel insurance and a travel certificate setting out details of your medical condition (see pages 32 to 49). Your nurse can advise you about supplies and any dietary issues you may have while you are away. There are also specialist organisations that can help and support you (see pages 120 to 124).

Cancer and air travel

Some people with cancer may be advised not to fly. This is usually because oxygen levels and air pressure change when flying. You may be advised not to fly if you:

- are breathless
- are anaemic (have a low number of red blood cells)
- have a low number of platelets (cells that help the blood to clot)
- are at risk of increased pressure or swelling in the brain because of a brain tumour
- have recently had surgery to your brain, chest, bowel or eye (see page 13)
- have problems with your ears or sinuses.

Always get advice from your cancer doctor or specialist nurse if you are thinking of flying anywhere. They can advise whether this is safe for you. The Civil Aviation Authority also has information about fitness to fly. Visit [caa.co.uk/Passengers/Before-you-fly/Am-I-fit-to-fly-/](https://www.caa.co.uk/Passengers/Before-you-fly/Am-I-fit-to-fly-/) for more information.

Risk of developing a blood clot

Cancer and some treatments increase your risk of developing a blood clot. Doctors call this a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Travelling, especially flying, also increases the risk of developing a blood clot. You are particularly at risk if you sit still for long periods of time. This could happen when you are on a long-distance flight, or on long bus, train or car journeys.

Your risk may also be higher if you have a certain type of cancer. Your doctor can explain this to you.

Cancer and some treatments can cause your blood to clot more easily than normal. Treatments that can increase the risk of developing a blood clot include:

- recent surgery
- chemotherapy drugs
- radiotherapy
- some hormonal therapy drugs, such as tamoxifen or diethylstilbestrol (Stillboestrol®)
- some targeted therapy or immunotherapy drugs.

You may also be more at risk if you have a personal or family history of blood clots.

Preventing blood clots

Before you travel, ask your cancer doctor or specialist nurse about your risk of a blood clot. They can tell you about anything you should do to help prevent blood clots.

Always ask if you should wear compression stockings for travel. These reduce your risk of a blood clot. This is important if you are going on a flight of 4 hours or more. Below-the-knee stockings apply gentle pressure to your ankles to help blood flow.

Make sure your compression stockings are properly measured and fitted for you. You can ask your nurse or a pharmacist for advice. Here are some other tips:

- Book an aisle seat, especially on flights, to make it easier to move around.
- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing, especially around the waist and groin.
- When sitting, exercise your legs, feet and toes about every half an hour.
- Walk around when you can and try to walk up and down the aisles for a few minutes every hour.
- Try some upper body and breathing exercises – these also help improve your circulation.
- Avoid taking sleeping pills.
- Drink plenty of water, especially during flights.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol or caffeine, as this can dehydrate you.

Possible symptoms of a blood clot

The possible symptoms of a blood clot include:

- pain, redness and swelling in a leg or arm
- breathlessness
- chest pain.

Always get urgent medical help if you have any of these symptoms. If you have a blood clot, you need treatment straight away. A blood clot is serious, but your doctor can treat it with drugs that thin the blood.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations can reduce your chance of getting certain infections. You may need vaccinations before you travel to some parts of the world.

If you have had a particular cancer or treatment, you may not be able to have these vaccinations. This may affect where you can travel. We have more information about getting vaccinations (see pages 24 to 27).

If you have or are at risk of lymphoedema, avoid having injections in the affected arm (see pages 98 to 103). It is important to get advice about vaccinations from your cancer doctor, specialist nurse, GP, practice nurse or a travel health professional.





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Talking to a health professional

Before you travel, talk to your cancer doctor, specialist nurse, GP, practice nurse or a travel health professional about your plans. They can give you advice about:

- whether it is safe for you to travel (see pages 7 to 8)
- any issues because of the type of cancer you have, your treatment or side effects (see pages 9 to 17)
- vaccinations to protect you from infections in some parts of the world (see pages 24 to 27)
- taking medicines abroad (see pages 64 to 73).

Asking for a doctor's letter

It may be helpful to ask your GP or cancer doctor for a letter giving a short explanation of your diagnosis and treatment. If you get copies of your hospital letters, these often summarise your condition and treatment.

You can take the letter with you and show it to healthcare providers abroad if you become ill. Some travel insurance providers may ask for a doctor's letter confirming you are fit to travel (see page 41).

If you are travelling abroad, you could look up translations of key phrases in the doctor's letter. For example, you could do this for the name of the cancer or treatment. You could use a foreign language dictionary, a translation app or the free online translation service at translate.google.com It is important to be certain that the translation of medical terms is correct.

You need a letter from your GP or cancer doctor if you take some medicines abroad with you (see pages 63 to 73).

'I currently have a Macmillan Nurse who I see regularly at my oncology appointments. I often ask her to flag specific questions to my oncologist, for example what medication to take whilst on holiday.'

Jolene

Getting vaccinations

Your GP, practice nurse or a private travel health clinic can help arrange vaccinations for you. Vaccinations reduce your chance of getting some serious infections found around the world.

For information about the vaccinations you need and the risk of infectious disease specific countries, visit:

- **travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries** if you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- **fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations** if you live in Scotland.

You cannot have some vaccinations during or soon after cancer treatment. But you may be able to get vaccinations for future travel before you start treatment. You need to talk with your cancer doctor and a travel health professional about this.

If possible, you should speak to your GP, practice nurse or private health clinic at least 8 weeks before you are due to travel. Some vaccines must be given in advance to work as well as possible. Other vaccines involve having a few doses spread over several weeks or months.

If you have, or have had, a particular type of cancer or cancer treatment, some vaccinations may not be suitable for you. This may mean you cannot travel safely to some parts of the world.

Live vaccines

Live vaccines use small amounts of a live virus or bacteria that has been weakened. This means they do not cause the infection. The vaccine encourages your immune system to develop white blood cells (antibodies) to protect against the infection.

You cannot have live vaccines if you have a weak immune system. Your immune system may be weakened if you:

- are having, or have recently had, chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- have had an organ, stem cell or bone marrow transplant
- are having, or have had in the past year, some targeted therapy or immunotherapy drugs
- are taking, or have recently taken, high doses of steroids or immunosuppressive medicines (drugs that weaken the immune system).

Your immune system should start working normally several months after you finish treatment. Talk to your cancer doctor about when would be a good time for you to start planning travel. They will explain when you can safely have the live vaccinations you need for the country you are visiting. You may need to ask them for a letter to say that you can have live vaccinations.

A travel health professional can also give you advice about where it would be safe to go and how best to prepare for the trip.

Live vaccines include:

- MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)
- shingles
- yellow fever.

Yellow fever vaccine

You must never have the yellow fever vaccine if you have thymus gland cancer, or have had your thymus removed. The thymus is a small gland in the chest between the lungs, which helps your body fight infection. You need to speak with your doctor and think carefully before visiting a country with a risk of yellow fever.

Other people may need to avoid live vaccines for the rest of their lives. You may need to do this if you have, or have had:

- lymphoma (cancer of the lymph nodes)
- leukaemia (cancer of the white blood cells)
- a cancer that is related to HIV infection.

If you have, or have had, one of these types of cancer, talk to your cancer doctor about whether you can have a live vaccine.

Inactivated vaccines

Inactivated vaccines use a virus or bacteria that has been killed. These vaccines are safe to have after cancer treatment, but they may be less effective in people with a weakened immune system. If you are having chemotherapy, ask your cancer doctor when you should have any vaccinations.

Inactivated vaccines include:

- diphtheria, tetanus and polio (a combined vaccine)
- hepatitis A
- hepatitis B
- flu injection
- Japanese encephalitis
- meningitis
- pneumonia
- typhoid injection
- tick-borne encephalitis
- cholera
- rabies.

Re-vaccination

When you are vaccinated for a disease, your body builds up a protection from this disease. If you have had high-dose chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant, you may lose this protection. This means you may need to be re-vaccinated after your treatment finishes. Your cancer doctor or specialist nurse will give you advice about this.

The vaccinations you need for your holiday depend on where you are travelling. If you have lymphoedema (swelling) in an arm, it is important to get your vaccinations in the other arm. This also applies if you are at risk of developing lymphoedema due to breast cancer surgery or radiotherapy to an armpit.



Planning ahead

You may find it helpful to use our planning and packing checklist to make sure you are prepared for your trip. Planning ahead can help you avoid any problems, so you can relax and enjoy your time away.

The planning and packing checklist suggests general things to think about before you travel and important items you may need to pack. There are also reminders about getting vaccinations, taking medicines abroad and dealing with any special needs.

The other side of the checklist has space for you to write down useful details and emergency contact numbers. You can tear this out and take it on holiday with you, so you have the information available if you need it.



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What is travel insurance?

Travel insurance protects you from losing money because of unexpected events that may happen:

- before you travel abroad
- while you are travelling abroad.

These are the main areas covered by a travel insurance policy:

- **Emergency medical treatment** – this includes ambulances and getting you back home safely.
- **Cancellation or curtailment** – this is if you need to cancel your trip or end it early (curtail it). For example, this could be if you or a family member are ill.
- **Personal liability** – this is if you injure someone or damage their property by accident.
- **Baggage** – this is if your belongings are lost or stolen.

You do not have to take out travel insurance. But if you go abroad without it, you could end up paying large amounts of money. For example, this may happen if you need emergency medical treatment or injure someone else by accident.

Travel insurance may be offered as a benefit with your:

- bank or building society account
- credit card
- home insurance.

It is a good idea to check with your bank, building society or home insurer.

General travel insurance tips

You may want some tips about buying travel insurance or talking to an insurer.

Macmillan cannot recommend travel insurance providers. But we have a set of standards that we think travel insurance providers should meet, in order to provide appropriate cover for people with cancer.

For example, you should be:

- offered appropriate cover that meets your needs, at a reasonable price
- given clear information that is easy to understand
- supported by trained, specialist staff who understand about cancer.

Not all providers meet our standards, but we are working to ensure that more providers achieve these standards in the future. Two travel insurance providers who meet these standards are Insurancewith, part of tifgroup, and the Post Office. They both have expertise in providing cover for people with medical conditions (see page 122).

Macmillan Online Community

Many people talk about travel insurance on the Macmillan Online Community. We have a monthly travel insurance blog and a forum about travel insurance at [macmillan.org.uk/travelinsurancegroup](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/travelinsurancegroup)

You can find out which insurers people are recommending. Remember, you need to find an insurer who can give you cover that is suitable for your needs. There are also tips about buying travel insurance and travelling abroad when you or someone you know are affected by cancer.

You do not have to join the Online Community to read what people are saying.

Macmillan Support Line

You can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) to speak to one of our financial guides.

We cannot recommend individual travel insurance providers for you. But we can give you some general tips on speaking to providers. We can also tell you about your options if you are not happy with the service a provider has given you.

Types of travel insurance

There are two main types of travel insurance:

- **Single-trip insurance** covers you for one trip abroad. You need to take out a new policy each time you travel.
- **Annual (or multi-trip) insurance** covers you for more than one trip in the same year. This may be more difficult to get when you have a health condition. If you are waiting for treatment or having treatment, you may not be able to buy annual insurance. It is also often more expensive, particularly for worldwide cover.

If you are planning more than two trips in the same year, you could think about getting annual insurance. But check first if it is cheaper to get single trip insurance for each trip.

If you have an annual policy and are diagnosed with cancer during the period of your cover, you may need to tell your insurer. You should check your policy to make sure. This also applies to family members if there is a risk they may have to cancel a holiday because of your health.

Winter sports and other activities

If you are planning on doing winter sports such as skiing, getting travel insurance may be more difficult. You may also need extra cover if you plan to do other high-risk activities or sports. These include scuba diving, mountain biking or bungee jumping.

Travel insurance providers usually ask if you plan to do any of these activities. As the activities are considered high risk, they may increase the:

- **premium** – the amount you need to pay for travel insurance
- **excess** – the amount you may have to pay towards any claim.

Standard travel insurance policies often do not cover these activities. Instead, you must usually include special cover, such as winter sports cover. If you get injured on holiday, medical bills can be very expensive.

It is important to check the details of any policy and make sure it specifically covers the activities you are planning. Some policies contain exclusions, which mean you would not be covered in certain situations. For example, an exclusion could be skiing off-piste (outside a ski resort) without a guide, or cycling without a helmet.

You can ask the provider if they can extend a policy so that it covers any extra activities you are doing. If this is not possible, you could look for suitable specialist policies. These are sometimes advertised as activity travel insurance, adventure travel insurance or sports travel insurance.

Remember to check that baggage insurance covers any sports or activity equipment you want to take with you. You can also protect your belongings under your home insurance policy.

Cruise holidays

Some travel insurance policies do not cover cruise holidays. Insurers are likely to charge you more for this type of trip. If you have annual insurance and are going on a cruise, check your policy covers you before you book.

Buying travel insurance

It is a good idea to get quotes from different insurance providers. This can help you get cover that meets your needs. It could also help you save money.

You can ask for insurance quotes from:

- insurance companies
- price comparison websites
- some supermarkets – they may have information leaflets about their insurance in stores
- your bank or building society.

Travel insurance through your bank or building society may not include cover for cancer. Always check with them to find out exactly what the cover includes.

A bank or building society may allow you to pay a top-up fee to include cover for pre-existing medical conditions, such as cancer. This may be cheaper than buying travel insurance separately. But make sure the cover meets your needs. For example, it should include cancellation cover in case you need to cancel your trip.

Premiums and excess payments

The premium is the amount of money you need to pay for travel insurance. The more likely the provider thinks you are to claim, the more they ask you to pay.

If you make a claim, you may need to pay an excess towards it first. Or, the excess may be taken away from the final claim payment. For example, if the excess on the policy is £50 and you make a successful claim for £250, the insurer pays you £200.

Travel insurance policies have different sections covering different events. For example, there may be a section about if you become ill or are injured. Another section may be about losing your belongings. Depending on your insurance provider and its policies, there may be:

- a single excess charge for any claim you make
- separate excess charges for each section of the policy when you claim
- separate excess charges for each person claiming, if more than one person is covered by the policy.

'I used Macmillan's guidance for travel insurance. I read the blog on the Online Community which was really helpful. When I went to Portugal, I found a travel insurance company who could give me a good rate and I've been with them ever since.'

Richard

British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA)

You can find a qualified and regulated **insurance broker** through the British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA).

Insurance brokers do not offer insurance directly. Instead, they try to find a suitable travel insurance provider for you. They can take your details, check and compare insurance options, and then search for providers on your behalf.

Call BIBA on **0370 950 1790** (local rate landline number, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm) or visit **[biba.org.uk/find-insurance](https://www.biba.org.uk/find-insurance)**

'An insurance broker found me a good price for an annual travel insurance policy. I was pleasantly surprised that I could get cover and that it didn't bankrupt me!'

Mia



Cancer and buying travel insurance

If you have cancer, check with your doctor or other healthcare professional that they are happy for you to travel. Even if you are fit to travel, this does not guarantee that you can get insurance to cover cancer.

Getting a letter from your doctor

Some travel insurance providers ask for a letter from your doctor confirming you are well enough to travel. This could come from your cancer doctor or your GP.

In some cases, GPs may charge you for this letter. They may be more likely to charge if the insurance company contacts them to ask for a letter. It is often best to ask your GP yourself.

It may save time if you get the letter before contacting insurance providers.

Be prepared for questions

Travel insurance providers need to ask you some questions to work out how much your policy will cost (the premium). This is called their medical screening process. This process may be carried out on the phone or through an online form.

Most people recommend that you phone the providers, rather than try to get online quotes. This is because it is easier to explain your situation to someone directly. Having certain information ready when you start looking for travel insurance makes your search easier.

Whether you get a quote through an online form or on the phone, you may need to answer some difficult or upsetting questions. For example, the provider may ask about the likely outcome of the cancer (the prognosis). Depending on how you feel about answering these questions, you may want to get quotes from only a couple of insurance providers at a time.

We have a checklist of common questions that insurers may ask on the next page and a comparison table for your insurance quotes on pages 47 to 48.

Many companies use the same computerised medical screening system. This means insurers often ask the same questions. Sometimes, you may feel the questions are not suitable for your situation. They may not allow you to explain your situation fully.

You can ask your insurer whether it is possible for them to underwrite the insurance policy manually. This is where a person considers your health instead of a computer. The person decides whether to offer you travel insurance and how much it will cost you. Some insurers always use this system. There are also other systems.

When contacting insurers, you can find out which medical screening system they use. The quotes you get may be different depending on this.

Even if you had cancer a long time ago, it is best to let your insurer know. This may not necessarily affect the price you pay.

Checklist

This checklist includes some common questions travel insurance providers may ask you. Writing down your answers in advance could help you prepare for calling them or filling in their online application form.

- Name of traveller(s)
- Age(s) of traveller(s)
- Where you are travelling
- Length of trip
- Health conditions (see page 44)
- Names of all the medicines you take
- How long ago were you diagnosed with cancer?
- Where is, or was, the cancer?
- Has the cancer spread? If so, where to?
- When did any treatment start or finish?
- Any current treatment or any treatment planned?
- Any surgery in the past or planned?
- Current symptoms and side effects
- How advanced is the cancer and is it terminal?
- Details of GP, hospital or specialist visits about the cancer over the last year
- Could the health of anyone else (either someone who is travelling with you or someone at home) affect the planned trip (see page 45)?
- Any medical equipment needed for travel?
- Any winter sports, extreme sports or similar activities planned?

Pre-existing medical conditions

When buying travel insurance, check whether the policy covers claims related (directly or indirectly) to pre-existing medical conditions. Not all insurance companies provide this cover.

Some companies specialise in providing travel insurance for people with pre-existing medical conditions, including cancer. They may offer you a policy that covers these kinds of claims, provided that:

- you have told the insurer about all pre-existing medical conditions
- the medical conditions have been accepted by the insurer in writing.

You may need to pay extra to cover claims related to cancer, depending on your personal circumstances. This is because there is an increased chance of you claiming for medical expenses or cancelling your trip.

If your policy says you should tell your insurer about pre-existing medical conditions, you must answer any questions they ask fully and accurately. If you do not and you later need to make a claim for anything, they could refuse to pay. They could also cancel your policy.

Changes in health

Your health or prescribed medication may change between the time that you take out the policy and when you book, or leave for, a trip. Some insurers ask you to tell them any new information about your health during this time.

You may feel that medical cover is not important if you think you can wait until you return to the UK before getting medical advice or treatment. But insurance is about covering the unexpected. This includes emergency treatment and making sure you are well enough to travel back to the UK.

Repatriation

Insurance can cover the extra costs of flying you home in an emergency. This is called repatriation. For example, you may have to travel by air ambulance or with medical equipment, a medical escort or a carer. A medical escort is a health professional or group of health professionals who travel with you on a commercial flight home. They can provide care and assistance if you are unwell.

Make sure you find out what is and is not covered before you take out a policy. It is important you know the policy meets your needs. If you are not sure, ask the insurer or an insurance broker (see page 39).

Cancer-related exclusion

If your travel insurance policy has a cancer-related exclusion, you are not covered for any claims related (directly or indirectly) to the cancer or its treatment. Make sure you understand exactly what is and is not included under your policy. Always check with the insurance provider if you are unsure.

You should consider the risk of not being covered if you have any cancer-related problems when you are away.

Taking medical equipment abroad

If you need to take any special medical equipment with you on holiday, make sure your insurance covers this.

If someone close to you has cancer

You need to tell your insurer if the health of someone close to you may affect your trip. This could be a family member, such as your partner, parent, child or business partner. If someone close to you has cancer, there is a risk your trip may have to end early or be cancelled because of their health.

There may not be any questions on the application form about the health of people close to you. But it is important to read the policy terms and conditions. These may make it clear that claims are not covered in certain situations: for example, if someone close to you is receiving or waiting for medical treatment or has a terminal condition. It is a good idea to check your policy carefully.

If you tell your insurer all this before your trip, you should be covered if you decide to cancel your holiday. They may ask you to pay a higher premium to make sure that you are covered (see page 38). This depends on the insurer and the policy. It is best to ask the insurer as early as possible about this.

You should tell the insurer if there are any health changes between the time you took out the insurance and the time you are travelling. This includes any changes in the health of the person with cancer, and in your own health.

Comparison table

This table is for you to compare the policies and quotes of different insurance providers. You can write down the contact details of each provider and some of the important details of their policy. In the final rows, you can compare the excess costs and the quotes that different providers give you. This may help you decide on the best insurance policy for your situation.

'I decided that peace of mind was important, especially when going away to countries further afield, so I started to shop around. I found a common theme that companies would not insure me or asked for crazy sums even to go to somewhere in Europe for a few days. I asked around for referrals and eventually found two companies who were pretty good and typically under £100 for a trip.'

Michael

Quote comparison table

Company name				
Contact details				
Amount of cover				
Covered if trip is cancelled?				
Cover for returning to UK in an emergency?				
Exclusion for cancer?				
Exclusion for anything else?				
Excess	£	£	£	£
Quote	£	£	£	£

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

If you are travelling to certain European countries, some travel insurance providers may reduce or remove the excess (the amount you may have to pay towards any claim) when you have an EHIC. The EHIC allows you to get free or less expensive emergency health treatment in those countries.

The UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020. You can continue to use your EHIC until 31 December 2020. After this time, access to emergency healthcare if you visit a European country may change. An EHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. It is important to have both an EHIC and travel insurance that makes sure you can get the emergency health treatment you need abroad. For the latest information, visit nhs.uk/ehic

We have more details about the EHIC and getting emergency healthcare abroad (see pages 87 to 95).



ARRANGING HELP WITH YOUR NEEDS BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

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Telling travel companies about your needs

Try to tell travel companies in advance about any needs you have that could affect your travel. This includes travel agents, airlines, ferry companies and tour operators. It is best to talk to them before you book the trip to make sure the right support will be available.

You could tell them about:

- any problems you have moving around
- whether you need a wheelchair
- equipment or medications you need to take with you
- whether you are likely to need oxygen during the trip due to breathing difficulties (see pages 72 to 73)
- help or support you may need at different points in the trip
- whether you are travelling with a companion
- whether it would be helpful to sit in an aisle seat, for example if you have bowel or bladder problems (see pages 110 to 111)
- your dietary needs.

You should try to tell travel companies as much as possible about how cancer affects you personally. This will help them understand what support you may need at different times during your trip.

The Association of British Travel Agents has a checklist for disabled and less mobile travellers. If you have problems moving around, you could complete this checklist and give it to travel companies. This will help them understand your needs. Visit **abta.com/accessible-travel** for more information.

There is a factsheet about travelling with additional needs or a disability at **travelhealthpro.uk/factsheet/80/travelling-with-additional-needs-and-or-disability**

Most travel companies have a medical officer, who can help you decide whether it is safe and practical for you to travel. You can contact them before you go on holiday and ask for help to plan your journey. They can also be contacted during your trip.

In some cases, companies may ask questions about your condition to check if you are fit to travel. You may be asked to complete a medical information form (MEDIF) or get a letter from your doctor. We have more information about getting a doctor's letter and speaking to your healthcare team before you travel (see pages 22 to 23). You can read about fitness to fly on the Civil Aviation Authority website. Visit **caa.co.uk/Passengers/Before-you-fly/Am-I-fit-to-fly/**

Air travel

Airports and airlines have 'special assistance' teams. They can help to arrange any support you need when you travel.

If you have specific needs, it is important to tell your airline at least 48 hours before your flight. They can arrange for people to help you and for equipment to be available. The help you can get may depend on which airport and airline you use.

Many UK airports have a sunflower lanyard scheme. People with a hidden, or not so obvious, medical condition or disability can choose to wear a sunflower lanyard. This allows airport staff to recognise that you have a hidden condition, without you needing to tell them.

You should be able to collect a sunflower lanyard from an airport assistance desk, or order one in advance. Contact your airport before you travel to find out the best way of getting the lanyard.

In the UK and Europe, there are laws that mean you have certain rights at airports if you are less mobile. This includes the right to free:

- help at arrival points, such as at terminal entrances, train stations, bus terminals and car parks
- help to reach the check-in counter and with registration
- help with moving through the airport, including to toilets, if you need it
- help getting on and off the plane
- help during the flight
- help with transferring between flights.

If you need help with eating, using oxygen, taking medication or using the toilet during a flight, another person must accompany you. The airline will try to make sure you sit next to each other, provided you give them at least 48 hours' notice.

You can travel with up to two items of mobility equipment free of charge on a plane. This equipment could include a wheelchair or walking frame. This does not count as part of your baggage allowance (the maximum amount of luggage you can take on a plane for free). Contact your airline in advance to explain what equipment you plan to take, and ask if there are any restrictions. We have more information about taking medicines and equipment abroad (see pages 63 to 73).

Airport security

Before flying, all passengers must go through airport security checks. If you are carrying syringes, needles or portable medicine pumps, it is useful to get a letter from your doctor. You can show this to the airport security staff.

Airport security checks include checks on mobility equipment. If you have a prosthesis (artificial or false body part) or a stoma, you may want to tell security staff as you enter the security area (see pages 107 to 109). This may mean you are less likely to be searched. It may be helpful to carry a letter from your GP or cancer doctor that explains your situation.

Your stoma care nurse or equipment supplier should be able to give you a travel certificate that explains your situation in different languages (see page 109). This is also available from support groups for people with a stoma.

If you wear a sunflower lanyard, this should make your journey through security more straightforward.

Sometimes people are randomly chosen to have a body search. If you are asked to have a body search, you can request that a security officer of the same sex does this. The body search is done in a private, lockable room. A family member or friend can come with you. You will not be left alone with just one security officer.

If you wear a wig, you do not usually need to have any extra security checks. But if a security officer wants to check your wig, you can ask them to use a hand scanner. This should mean you do not need to remove it. Very rarely, a security officer may want you to remove the wig. If this happens, you can ask to do this in a private space.

The processes for airport security can vary between countries and airports. In general, any security checks should be done sensitively.

Body scanning

Full body scanners are used at some airports, including some airports in the UK. Travellers are chosen at random to have a body scan with security scanning equipment. Or you may be chosen if you have activated a metal detector. You cannot fly if you refuse to have a body scan during an airport security check.

The purpose of a body scanner is to show whether you have hidden weapons or banned items. But the image also shows if you have a stoma, implant or external prosthesis. Security staff are trained to handle sensitive medical issues and to treat passengers with respect.

If you are chosen, here are some things to know:

- You can ask for a body search instead of a body scan, if you prefer. This is a thorough hand search and you may be asked to loosen or take off some clothing.
- You can ask for a security officer of the same sex to check your scan on the screen.
- You have the scan in the security area, with a member of airport staff present.

The scan takes just a few seconds. After the scan, only you and a security officer see an outline of your body on a small screen. No body features or skin can be seen. You cannot be identified from the scanned image and you do not meet the security officer. Your scan is permanently deleted after a security officer has looked at it.

The policy on body scanning may vary at airports in different countries outside of the UK. If you are travelling to a country where you do not speak the language, you may wish to contact the embassy for that country. They can give you details of their policy on body scanning.

It may be helpful to carry a card that briefly describes your condition and gives information about any prosthesis or stoma.

Parking and driving abroad

In the UK, the Blue Badge scheme generally allows you to park for free in restricted areas if you have severe mobility problems. You can find out more about the Blue Badge and other driving schemes and concessions in the UK from your local council. Visit [gov.uk/browse/driving/disability-health-condition](https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/disability-health-condition)

The Blue Badge is also recognised across Europe, but the rules differ between countries. It is important to check in advance where, when and for how long you can park with your Blue Badge. The government has published a guide to using a Blue Badge in the European Union (EU). You can download this from [gov.uk/government/publications/blue-badge-using-it-in-the-eu](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blue-badge-using-it-in-the-eu)

You can find more information about driving in specific countries on the following websites:

- the AA – visit [theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas](https://www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas)
- the RAC – visit [rac.co.uk/driving-abroad](https://www.rac.co.uk/driving-abroad)

The International Automobile Federation has a guide to parking abroad. You can also download and print a Parking Card, which explains that you are disabled in the local language. You can leave this next to your Blue Badge when you park. To read the guidance, visit [disabledmotorists.eu](https://www.disabledmotorists.eu)

Accessible rail travel

It is a good idea to check with railway companies in advance whether specific train lines and stations are suitable for your needs. Many trains in the UK and abroad are wheelchair accessible. You can ask about:

- special train compartments for people who use a wheelchair
- lifts or ramps to access the train
- help from trained staff with getting on and off the train
- toilets suitable for disabled travellers.

In the UK, National Rail runs a Passenger Assist scheme. You can book help at any station for any train journey. Call them for free on **0800 022 3720** (textphone **0845 605 0699**) and give details of your planned journey, 24 hours before you travel. You can check if a UK railway station has accessible facilities by visiting **nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations**

In other countries, contact the railway company to ask what help is available during your journey. You can also check the information on the railway company's website. There is a list of European railway company websites at **eurail.com**

In England, Scotland and Wales, the Disabled Persons Railcard entitles people with mobility needs to 1/3 off rail fares. If you are travelling with another adult, they will also get the discount. To apply for a railcard, visit **disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk**

In Northern Ireland, half fare travel is available for people with mobility needs. To get this discount, you must apply for a travel card called a SmartPass. For more information, call Translink on **028 9066 6630** (textphone **18001 9066 6630**) or visit **nidirect.gov.uk/articles/free-and-concessionary-bus-and-rail-travel**

We have more information about transport schemes and concessions in the UK. Similar travel discounts may be available in some other countries. Visit **macmillan.org.uk/transport-and-parking**



Sea travel

If you are disabled or have problems moving around and are travelling by ship from the UK or Europe, you have a legal right to free help. Tell the carrier, travel agent or tour operator when you book, or at least 48 hours before you travel, if you need:

- help getting on and off the ship
- special accommodation
- special seating
- to bring any medical equipment with you.

The facilities available on ships can vary. Most modern cruise ships have disabled-access cabins. But places may be limited, and it is a good idea to book early.

There may be restrictions on taking some medical equipment, such as oxygen cylinders or large mobility aids. This is more likely to be the case if the ship is small and space is limited. Speak to the company before you book the trip to find out more.

Carriers can ask that you are accompanied by someone, if this is needed:

- for safety reasons
- because of the way the ship or port are designed.

This companion can travel with you free of charge.

Always tell a cruise line or ferry service if you need to travel with a carer. On a ferry, your carer may be able to travel for free.



TAKING MEDICINES ABROAD

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Advice from your healthcare team

Your cancer doctor, specialist nurse, GP, practice nurse, pharmacist or travel clinic can advise you about taking medicines abroad. They can tell you if you need to make any special arrangements. Try to talk to them as early as possible before your trip.

The following organisations have more detailed information about travelling with medicines:

- National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-and-travel
- Fit for Travel at fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/general-travel-health-advice/travelling-with-medicines

Before taking some types of medicine in or out of the UK, you need a letter from your doctor. This includes painkillers, such as opioids. These are sometimes called morphine-type medicines. Having a letter from your doctor is also helpful if you need to take the following with you:

- syringes
- needles
- portable medicine pumps (small devices that give liquid medicines into your body in a controlled way).

The letter from your doctor should include:

- your name and address
- your date of birth
- the country (or countries) you are visiting
- your dates of travel
- a list of your medicines, including the doses, strength and how much you are taking with you.



Check country restrictions

Some countries restrict or limit the drugs that can be taken into or out of the country. If you are taking medicines abroad with you, it is important to check with the country's embassy or high commission.

If you are travelling for more than 3 months, or carrying more than 3 months' supply of medicines, you may need a personal medicines licence from the Home Office. This allows you to take certain drugs out of the UK. Check with your doctor if you are not sure whether you need a licence for your medicines.

To get a personal medicines licence, you must complete a form and send it to the Home Office Drugs and Firearms Licensing Unit (see page 121). You must also attach a letter from your doctor to the form. This should include:

- your name
- which countries you are visiting and when
- a list of your medicines, including the doses, strength and how much you are taking with you
- the signature of the person who prescribed your medicines.

You can download a form at [gov.uk/government/publications/personal-import-export-licence-application-form](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-import-export-licence-application-form) Or you can ask the Home Office Drugs and Firearms Licensing Unit to send you a form by calling **020 7035 6330**. You should apply for a personal medicines licence at least 10 working days before your travel date.

To find out the maximum amounts of controlled drugs (those with strict legal controls) that you can take out of the UK, contact the Home Office Drugs and Firearms Licensing Unit (see page 121).

Have enough medicine for your trip

If you take regular medicines, make sure you have enough to last for your whole trip. It is important to have enough supplies in case your return is delayed. If you are going for a long time, check whether you can get the medicines you need in the country you are visiting. Your doctor can normally only prescribe a limited amount.

If a course of medicine you are taking is due to run out when you are abroad, speak to your GP before you travel. They may be able to increase your prescription. If you are already abroad and run out of supplies, you may be able to register with a local doctor or buy medicines from a pharmacist.

The quality of medicines can vary a lot in other countries. Sometimes, fake medicines (called counterfeit or falsified medicines) are available in normal pharmacies. This is a greater problem in less wealthy countries outside of Europe and North America. Fake medicines are also a problem with poorly regulated online pharmacies.

Fake medicines may have similar or the same packaging to the real ones, but the wrong ingredients or low levels of the active (most important) ingredient.

If you do buy drugs abroad, check that the pharmacy is licensed. You should also ask the pharmacist to confirm that the medicine has the same active ingredient as the one you are taking. The British embassy or high commission in the country you are visiting can advise you about local healthcare.

Medicines usually have at least two names:

- the name of the drug (its general or generic name)
- the name of the brand.

For example, the generic drug anastrozole is sometimes sold under the brand Arimidex®. Brand names can vary between countries, so it is useful to keep a record of generic names. Your pharmacist can help you with this.



Storing and carrying medicines

You should carry all medicines, letters from your doctor and personal medicines licences in your hand luggage. Customs officers usually need to see them. Make sure you keep medicines in their original packaging, as it is important they are clearly labelled. If they are not controlled drugs, it may help to carry one set in your hand luggage and another in your suitcase. That way, if one set goes missing, you still have the other.

It can also help to keep a list of:

- the medicines you are taking
- the doses
- how many times a day you take them.

This will help you get replacements if you lose your medicines. Always use the generic names of the medicines, as brand names can vary from country to country.

Flying with liquid medicines

Most non-medicinal liquids in your hand luggage are restricted to a maximum of 100ml. But liquid medicines (including liquid diets and inhalers) that are needed during the flight can usually be taken on a plane without restriction. You need to check this with your airline and the airport you are leaving from before you travel.

You also need to bring a supporting document from your doctor or another medical professional. This could be a letter or signed prescription.

Airport staff may need to open the containers to check the liquid medicines when you go through security (see pages 55 to 57). For more information about carrying liquids in your hand luggage, visit [gov.uk/hand-luggage-restrictions](https://www.gov.uk/hand-luggage-restrictions)

If you need to keep medicines cool

It is best to keep medicines dry, cool and out of direct sunlight. The shelf life of some medicines (the period when they can be safely used) may be reduced if they are not kept at the correct temperature. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

You can buy small cool bags from your chemist or pharmacy if you are taking medicines that must be kept cool.

If you use cool packs, be careful that your medicines do not freeze because this may affect them. You can check with your hotel whether there will be a fridge in your room. If not, ask whether your medicines can be stored somewhere secure and kept cool but not frozen.

You may find it helpful to have a simple fridge thermometer to check the storage temperature. This should be 2°C (36°F) to 8°C (46°F) for medicines that are stored in the fridge.

Taking your medicines at the right time

If you are travelling across international time zones, this is likely to affect the time you take your regular medicines. If the time difference is only a couple of hours, you may want to continue taking your medicines at the usual times (UK time).

If there is a time difference of several hours, you could end up taking your medicines at inconvenient times of day or night. It may be easier to change the times you take your medicines gradually to fit in with the local time. Your GP, practice nurse, pharmacist or travel clinic can help you plan how to do this.



Oxygen

You can arrange oxygen for travelling in the UK free of charge through your usual oxygen provider. You need to tell them the details of your holiday, including the dates you are travelling and where you will be staying. Try to give as much notice as you can, and they should arrange everything for you. Check that the place where you will be staying can have oxygen delivered and stored there.

If you plan to fly, you may need a fitness-to-fly test. Your GP can help you complete this. It shows whether you need oxygen during the flight.

You also need to contact your airline. It is best to do this well before your journey, so you can check their policy about taking oxygen on the plane. There may be a cost for this. The European Lung Foundation has information about the oxygen policies of over 100 airlines. Visit europeanlung.org/en/lung-disease-and-information/air-travel/airline-index

If you need oxygen during your holiday, you must arrange for it to be provided before you travel. Oxygen suppliers in the UK only provide oxygen for travel and stays within this country. They may have details of overseas oxygen providers that you can contact.

If you go on holiday in Europe, you can currently arrange oxygen through the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) scheme – see pages 89 to 92. You must have a valid EHIC and use the authorised oxygen company for the country you are visiting.

The UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020. You can continue to use your EHIC until 31 December 2020. After this time, healthcare arrangements if you visit a European country may change. For the latest information, visit [nhs.uk/ehic](https://www.nhs.uk/ehic)

If you are travelling outside of Europe, contact an oxygen company that supplies the country you are visiting. To find an oxygen provider, you could contact the British consulate in the country you are travelling to or search online.

For more information, visit the Going on holiday section of the British Lung Foundation website at [blf.org.uk/support-for-you/going-on-holiday](https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/going-on-holiday)



TAKING CARE WHILE YOU ARE AWAY

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Eating and drinking

Wherever you are in the world, be careful about what you eat and drink. Many infections are spread by contaminated food and water. This includes water in:

- swimming pools
- lakes
- rivers
- the sea.

Try not to swallow water when you are swimming.

It is important to wash your hands regularly, especially before handling food.

If you are at risk of infection because of cancer treatment, you need to be extra careful about what you eat and drink. Infections can be more serious and difficult to treat if your immune system is weak (see pages 10 to 11). Make sure you get advice before your trip.

You can find information about the risks of contaminated food and water in specific countries at:

- **travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries** if you live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland
- **fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations** if you live in Scotland.

Tips for avoiding stomach problems

- Drink bottled water if you are not sure that the water is clean. You can also use this to brush your teeth. Make sure seals on bottles of water are not broken before you open them.
- If you are not sure that the drinking water is clean, you should sterilise it. You can do this by boiling it for one minute, or by using a filtering system or sterilisation tablets.
- Do not have ice in drinks, unless you are sure it is made from safe water.
- Only eat freshly cooked food that has been cooked thoroughly and is still hot. Avoid leftovers and reheated food.
- Avoid uncooked food. This includes fruit, unless you can peel it or remove the outer skin or shell yourself, salads and uncooked vegetables.
- Be careful when eating shellfish, as it may contain harmful bacteria. Make sure shellfish is cooked thoroughly, or avoid eating it.
- Avoid food that may have been exposed to flies. This could include buffet food that may have been left out for some time and food from street traders.
- Avoid ice cream from unreliable sources, such as street stalls. Only eat ice cream made from pasteurised milk, which has been heated to a high temperature to kill any bacteria.
- Avoid or boil unpasteurised milk.

- Always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, and before eating or preparing food. If clean water is not readily available, use disposable wipes or alcohol hand gel.
- Pack anti-diarrhoea medicine when you travel, such as Imodium[®], Pepto-Bismol[®], Lomotil[®] or Normaloe[®].
- Pack rehydration powder, such as Dioralyte[®], Dioralyte Relief[®] or Electrolade[®] sachets. These help to replace body fluids that are lost when you have diarrhoea.



Animals and rabies

Animal bites and scratches can cause dangerous infections. It is important to be careful and avoid contact with animals abroad, even if they seem harmless. Animals in many places, especially in Asia, Africa and Central and South America, can carry rabies. It is not found in the UK, except in a small number of wild bats. There is a map showing the risk of rabies in different countries on the World Health Organisation website. Visit who.int/ith/rabies2018.png?ua=1

Rabies is a rare, but very serious, infection of the brain and nerves. It is usually caught from the bite or scratch of an infected animal, such as a dog. An animal licking an open wound can also put you at risk. It is important to treat any wound straight away and get urgent medical help.

If you have treatment for rabies before any symptoms appear, it is very effective. But once symptoms appear, rabies cannot often be cured and is usually fatal. If you are travelling to an area where rabies is common, you can have a vaccine before your travel. You must normally pay for this.

If you are scratched or bitten, it is important to follow these steps:

1. Clean the wound with soap and running water straight away and for at least 15 minutes. If there is any rabies virus on the wound surface, this can help wash some of it away and reduce the risk.
2. Use an antiseptic containing alcohol or iodine to disinfect the wound, and then cover it with a simple dressing.
3. See a doctor straight away, even if you had the rabies vaccine before you travelled. You will need extra treatment urgently.

You can find more information and advice for travellers on preventing rabies at [nhs.uk/conditions/rabies](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rabies)

Insects

In some countries, many diseases can be spread by insects and ticks. Always use insect repellent, preferably containing up to 50% DEET (diethyl-m-toluamide). This is the main ingredient that makes insect repellent work.

Try to cover up your skin as much as possible, especially if you are going out at night. Mosquitos that can spread malaria tend to bite from dusk until dawn. It is best to wear loose fitting clothes, long sleeves, trousers or long skirts.

For further information, see the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) insect and tick avoidance factsheet at travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/38/insect-and-tick-bite-avoidance



Taking care in the sun

During and after treatment, it is important to protect your skin from the sun. Some cancer treatments make your skin more sensitive to the sun, so you burn more easily. This can be temporary or permanent (see page 11).

How sensitive your skin is to the sun also depends on the type and dose (strength) of your treatment.

If you have had chemotherapy

Some chemotherapy drugs can make your skin more sensitive. This can sometimes last for several years after treatment. Ask your cancer doctor or specialist nurse if you need to take special care to protect your skin.

Some people also find chemotherapy makes their skin sensitive to chemicals, such as chlorine. You may need to avoid swimming in pools that are treated with chlorine. It is best to avoid hot tubs and saunas because bacteria and other germs grow faster in warm water.

If you have had radiotherapy

The skin in the area treated by radiotherapy stays sensitive for many years. You need to take extra care to protect it from the sun, especially for the first year. The skin in that area is at a higher risk of burning and long-term sun damage, including skin cancers.

If you have had targeted or immunotherapy drugs

Many targeted therapy drugs and immunotherapy drugs can make your skin sensitive to the sun. Your skin may burn more easily than normal. Ask your doctor or nurse if you need to take special care to protect your skin.

Tips for protecting yourself in the sun

Following these tips will help make sure your skin does not burn:

- Protect your face, neck and ears with a wide-brimmed hat.
- Cover up with long-sleeved tops and trousers or long skirts. If you have had radiotherapy, keep the treated area completely covered.
- Wear light, loose and comfortable clothes made of cotton or natural fibres. These have a closer weave and give better protection from the sun.
- Wear sunglasses with a guaranteed ultraviolet (UV) light filter. These protect your eyes from the sun's burning rays.
- Use sun cream with a high sun protection factor (at least SPF 30) and a 4 or 5-star UVA protection rating. This should protect you against both UVA and UVB (types of radiation from the sun). Follow the instructions and reapply as recommended, particularly after swimming or washing.

- If you have lost your hair or it is thinning, cover up with a hat or headscarf to protect your scalp. If you do not want to cover your head, use sun cream that has an SPF of at least 30 on your scalp.
- If you are using insect repellent, apply your sun cream first and then spray the repellent on top.
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest part of the day (usually between 11am and 3pm). Heat can make cancer-related fatigue (tiredness) worse. Try to sit in the shade, even at other times of the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. But remember that alcohol or drinks with caffeine in them can make you dehydrated.
- If you want to look tanned, use fake-tanning lotions or sprays instead of sunbathing or using a sunbed.

There are more tips on the NHS website. Visit [nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/sunscreen-and-sun-safety)



HEALTHCARE ABROAD

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If you become ill

If you become ill while staying in a hotel, ask the receptionist to call a doctor. If you need urgent attention, contact the emergency services or go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital.

If you have time, try to get advice from a doctor or nurse who speaks the same language as you. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (a government department responsible for protecting British interests around the world) may be able to help with this – see page 121.

Contacting family members or friends

Keep the names and addresses of close family and friends with your passport. British Consular officials (who protect UK citizens in a foreign country) can contact them if you need their help. It is important to check these details are up to date each time you travel.

If you need to return to the UK quickly, you should also contact British Consular officials. They can usually arrange this for you, but you may need to pay a fee. Visit **consular-appointments.service.gov.uk** for contact details of British consulates abroad.

Travel insurance

Medical treatment abroad can be very expensive. Travel insurance can cover these costs. Remember to take your insurance policy document and helpline number with you when you travel. We have more information about travel insurance (see pages 31 to 49).

Emergency healthcare in European countries

If you become ill on holiday, you can get emergency healthcare in some European countries. The treatment may be free or at a reduced cost. You need to apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The UK has now left the European Union (EU), but an EHIC is still valid until 31 December 2020. An EHIC is not a replacement for travel insurance and you should have both before you travel.

What is an EHIC?

All UK residents can get a free EHIC. It means you can get free, or less expensive, emergency treatment in some European countries. This includes countries in the EU, and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The EHIC does not cover Turkey, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

The UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020. You can continue to use your EHIC until 31 December 2020. After this time, access to emergency healthcare if you visit a European country may change. An EHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. It is important to have both an EHIC and travel insurance that makes sure you can get the emergency health treatment you need abroad. For the latest information, visit [nhs.uk/ehic](https://www.nhs.uk/ehic)

What does an EHIC cover?

The EHIC has the following benefits:

- It covers healthcare provided by the government of the country you are visiting. The EHIC allows you to have treatment that you need before you return home.
- The EHIC gives you access to the same treatment as a resident of the country you are visiting. This may not be the same as the care you would expect to get from the NHS (England, Scotland and Wales) or the Health Service (Northern Ireland).
- It can be used if you need ongoing treatment while you are abroad, such as regular injections. The EHIC also covers oxygen treatment, but you must arrange and book this before you go on holiday. Remember that the same medicines may not be available in all countries.
- It covers treatments that are needed during your trip for chronic or pre-existing conditions. This is only if the reason for your visit is not specifically to have health treatment abroad.

In some countries, people are expected to contribute a percentage towards the cost of their healthcare provided by the government. If you are treated under this type of healthcare system abroad, you must pay the same contribution as a person from that country. This is called a co-payment or patient share.

You can claim back the difference between the total bill and the patient share with your EHIC. But you cannot get a refund for the actual patient share you have contributed.

In other countries, you may need to pay for your healthcare in full when you are treated. You can then claim a refund with your EHIC. You should try to apply for a refund before you return to the UK (see page 95).

The EHIC cannot be used instead of travel insurance and does not cover:

- any private medical costs
- travelling abroad for health treatment
- medical evacuation (where you need to be taken to hospital by special transport, such as a helicopter)
- being flown back to the UK if you are ill (repatriation)
- treatment on cruises
- mountain rescue services
- non-medical things, like a cancelled trip or lost or stolen property.

It is important to have both an EHIC and the right kind of travel insurance before you travel. As the EHIC does not cover repatriation, it is important to check whether your travel insurance would pay for this.

Many insurance companies remove or reduce the excess (the amount you pay towards any claim) if you have an EHIC.

Who can get an EHIC?

You can apply for an EHIC if you are legally living and settled in the UK. This is called being ordinarily resident.

If you usually live in the UK but are not a national of the UK or another country covered by the card, you must apply by post. You should include proof that you are ordinarily resident in the UK. More information is available on the NHS website at [nhs.uk/ehic](https://www.nhs.uk/ehic)

Applying for and renewing an EHIC

It is free to apply for and renew an EHIC.

You can apply for an EHIC:

- online at [gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card](https://www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card)
- by post, using a form downloaded from the website
- by calling **0300 330 1350**.

You should only apply for an EHIC in these ways. Do not use unofficial websites that charge you to apply for an EHIC or renew one.

Each person travelling must carry an EHIC, including children. To get an EHIC for children under the age of 16, list them as dependants when you apply for your own card.

For each person who needs an EHIC, give their:

- full name
- date of birth
- National Insurance or NHS number (England and Wales), CHI number (Scotland) or Health and Care Number (Northern Ireland).

Your EHIC normally arrives within 7 days. It is a good idea to store the card somewhere safe and secure. Keep it with your passport while you are travelling.

An EHIC lasts for up to 5 years. Make sure you renew your card in time for any trips. You can renew an EHIC up to 6 months before the expiry date, but any time left on the card will not be added to your new card. You can find more information at [nhs.uk/ehic](https://www.nhs.uk/ehic)

Countries with mutual healthcare agreements with the UK

Some countries outside the EU have mutual healthcare agreements with the UK. These countries provide free or reduced-cost emergency health treatment to people from the UK. You have access to the same treatment as a resident of that country. This may be different from what you would expect from the NHS or Health Service.

The agreements do not cover every situation. They do not cover the cost of helping you return to the UK or routine monitoring of pre-existing medical conditions. For this reason, you still need to get travel insurance.

To claim free or reduced-cost treatment in these countries, you must prove you are a UK resident. This usually involves showing a UK passport.

For an up-to-date list of countries that have a mutual agreement with the UK, visit [nhs.uk/healthcareabroad](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcareabroad)

Countries with no healthcare agreements with the UK

In countries that are not covered by the EHIC and where there is no mutual agreement, you must pay the full cost of any healthcare. If you are travelling to these countries, it is important to buy travel insurance that covers any healthcare you may need.

The high commission, consulate or embassy of the country you are visiting can give you information on their healthcare services. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has details of where you can find these and British embassies when you are abroad (see page 121).



Getting a refund on your treatment

You may need to pay for healthcare while you are abroad and then claim this money back. The process for getting a refund varies. To apply for a refund, you are likely to need the original invoices, receipts and documents from your treatment. Remember to keep any paperwork and make copies if necessary.

If you have travel insurance, your insurance company will explain how to claim a refund.

If you have an EHIC and are travelling in a country where it is valid, try to claim any refunds before you return home. There is information about how to do this in different countries at [nhs.uk/healthcareabroad](https://www.nhs.uk/healthcareabroad) This website also has information about reclaiming costs in all countries that have mutual health agreements with the UK.

For details of how to claim a refund with your EHIC once you return to the UK, contact the Overseas Healthcare Service on **0191 218 1999** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).



TRAVELLING WITH A LONG-TERM TREATMENT EFFECT

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If you have lymphoedema

Lymphoedema is a swelling caused by a build-up of fluid in the body's tissues. It can happen when lymph nodes (glands) have been blocked, damaged or removed because of cancer or its treatment. Lymphoedema can affect any part of the body, but usually develops in your arm or leg.

Planning ahead can help you to manage any problems and enjoy your time away.

It is important to continue with your usual routine for looking after your affected limb. There are also other things you need to be careful about when travelling.

We have more information about lymphoedema in our booklet **Understanding lymphoedema** (see page 116).

Before you go

If you have a lymphoedema specialist, talk to them about your travel plans before you go.

These tips may help you prepare for your trip:

- If you need any vaccinations before your holiday, avoid having the injections in the affected limb (see pages 24 to 27).
- If you are planning a more active holiday, talk to your lymphoedema specialist before you travel. They can advise you about how to organise your trip, so you do not put too much stress on the affected area.

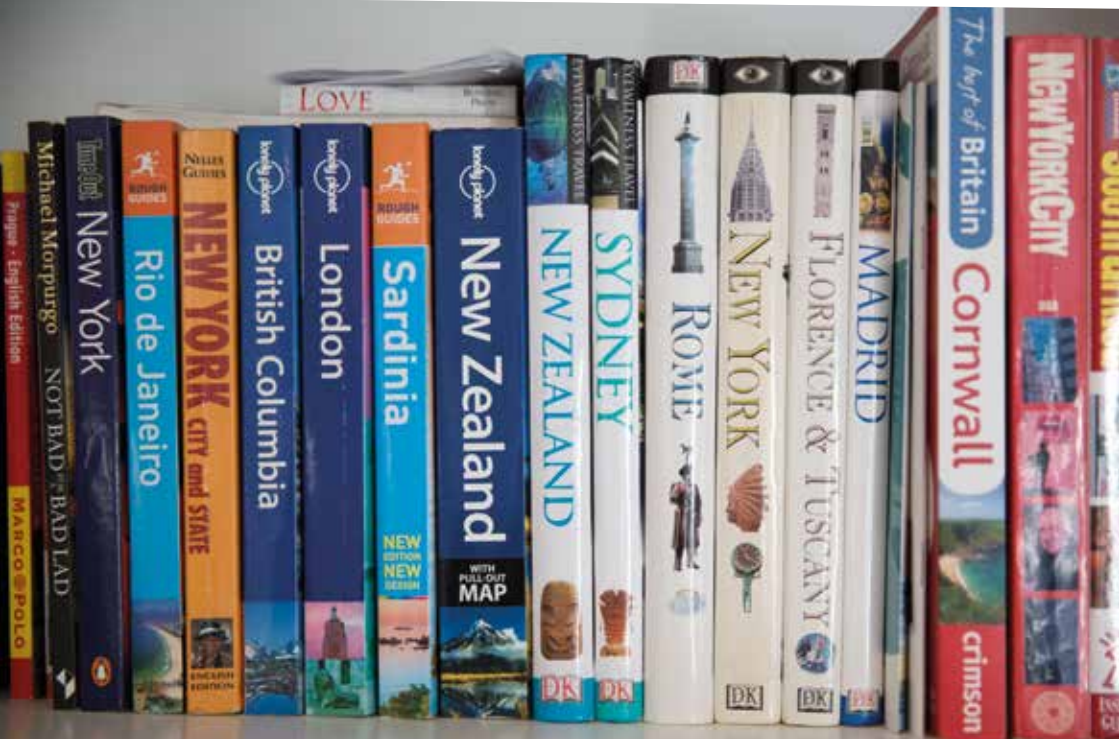
- If you are flying a long distance and have had swelling before, your specialist may recommend wearing a compression garment. A trained specialist should measure you for a compression garment. It must fit you properly and not be too loose or too tight.
- If you have never had any swelling before, you should not wear a compression garment when flying. This may increase the risk of swelling.
- It is important to keep your affected limb moving when flying. Ask your lymphoedema specialist what exercises may help. When booking your flight, you could ask for an aisle seat. This gives you more room to move the affected limb.
- Ask your GP or lymphoedema specialist to give you some antibiotics. This is in case you develop a skin infection called cellulitis. Cellulitis can become serious if it is not treated quickly.
- The Lymphoedema Support Network (LSN) has guidance for healthcare professionals on using antibiotics to treat cellulitis when you have lymphoedema (see page 123). They also have factsheets called 'What is Cellulitis?' and 'Management of Cellulitis in Lymphoedema'. You can download an order form from their website at **lymphoedema.org/images/pdf/orderform.pdf**
- Ask your pharmacist or travel health clinic for advice on which products can best protect your skin when you are on holiday.
- If you are taking prescription drugs with you, make sure you have enough for the whole trip and any unexpected delays (see pages 67 to 68). Also get a letter from your doctor explaining what medicines you are taking (see pages 22 to 23).
- Make sure you have suitable travel insurance (see pages 31 to 49).

During your journey

Here are some tips to reduce the risk of getting lymphoedema or making it worse during your journey:

- Avoid sitting in the same position for the whole journey.
- If you have lymphoedema in your arm, try to move it as often as you can. Carry any shoulder bag or heavy luggage with the other arm.
- When you travel on a plane or train, move around a lot and do gentle stretching exercises. While you are sitting, circle your ankles, move your arms and legs and try some deep breathing.
- During longer car journeys, stop regularly, get out and walk around.
- Try to leave yourself enough leg room when travelling. To allow space to stretch your legs, do not put anything under the seat in front of you.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes and shoes.
- If you are at risk of lymphoedema in your legs, wear fitted flight socks. Your GP, specialist nurse or pharmacist can advise you about this.
- If you have lymphoedema, you may have been advised to wear a compression garment during a long flight or journey. You can wear it for a few hours before your journey, during the journey and for a few hours afterwards.

- Use a suitcase with wheels rather than carrying a heavy bag.
- Ask a flight assistant or someone else to put your luggage in the overhead compartment.
- Drink plenty of water, but not too much caffeine and alcohol, to avoid getting dehydrated.



While you are away

There are things you can do to help with lymphoedema when you are away:

- Avoid lifting and pulling heavy bags with your affected arm. Ask someone to help.
- Take care of your skin by keeping it clean and using moisturiser every day. Avoid getting sunburnt, as this can increase swelling (see page 83).
- If you have lymphoedema in your leg, do not walk barefoot on a beach or around a swimming pool. This reduces the risk of cuts and possible infection in your foot.
- If you get a cut, scratch or graze on the affected limb, clean it straight away with soap and water. Put on an antiseptic cream and cover the affected area.
- Sea salt and chlorine make the skin extra dry. After swimming, shower and put moisturiser on your skin. Swimming or moving around in water is good for lymphoedema. You do not need to wear a compression garment while swimming because the water creates enough pressure.
- Avoid saunas and hot baths. Keep the affected limb as cool as possible.
- Use an insect repellent spray or cream to protect yourself from insect bites. This should contain up to 50% DEET (diethyl-m-toluamide). DEET is the main ingredient that makes insect repellent work.
- If you are bitten or stung, try not to scratch the affected area. An antihistamine cream or tablets can help ease the itching, pain and swelling.

- If you start to get signs of an infection, tell a doctor straight away. Signs include flu-like symptoms, a high temperature, redness, a rash or heat in the affected limb, or increased swelling. If you have antibiotics with you, start taking them as soon as possible.

More information

The Lymphoedema Support Network (LSN) publish a more detailed factsheet called 'Holidays and Travel'. They can also send you a card or bracelet explaining that you have lymphoedema. This is useful in case you have an accident or need medical care. You can download an order form from their website at lymphoedema.org/images/pdf/orderform.pdf



Malaria

Malaria is a disease spread by mosquitos. The symptoms are similar to flu and can include:

- a high temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or above
- feeling hot, shivery or sweaty
- a headache
- being sick
- muscle pains or tenderness
- diarrhoea
- a cough
- generally feeling unwell.

If your spleen has been removed, malaria can be especially severe. If possible, it is best to avoid travelling to areas where malaria is common.

Malaria is a risk in many tropical parts of the world. This includes:

- large areas of Africa and Asia
- Central and South America
- Haiti and the Dominican Republic
- parts of the Middle East
- some Pacific islands.

Talk to your doctor before you arrange to visit any of these areas. You could also speak to a private travel health service. Private travel clinics are listed and given a quality rating on the Care Quality Commission's website at cqc.org.uk

If you decide to travel to an area at risk, try to avoid infection using the **ABCD** of malaria prevention:

- **A**wareness of risk – Find out how common malaria is where you are travelling.
- **B**ite prevention – Use insect repellent, cover your arms and legs with suitable clothing, and use mosquito nets if necessary (see page 82).
- **C**heck whether you need to take anti-malarial tablets.
- **D**iagnosing and treating malaria straight away is very important. If you have symptoms, get medical help immediately.

For more information about malaria, visit the NHS website at nhs.uk/conditions/malaria

If your spleen has been removed

If your spleen has been removed (splenectomy), you may be more likely to get some types of infection. The spleen contains special white blood cells that destroy bacteria and help your body fight infections when you are unwell.

Before travelling, your doctor should give you a supply of antibiotics and explain when you may need to take them. They may also suggest that you get vaccinated against pneumonia and meningitis.

You can find more information about vaccinations and travel health on the NHS website at [nhs.uk/planners/vaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/planners/vaccinations)

Gov.uk have a leaflet and patient warning card that you can carry with you when travelling. Visit [gov.uk/government/publications/splenectomy-leaflet-and-card](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/splenectomy-leaflet-and-card) for more information.

If you have a stoma

If you have a stoma or opening on your tummy (such as a urostomy, colostomy or an ileostomy) you need to prepare before going away.

Having a stoma should not stop you from travelling, but you may need to plan your trip more carefully.

Getting information

Your stoma nurse can give you advice about issues such as:

- your diet while you are abroad
- activities like swimming
- how high temperatures can affect the glue used to secure the stoma bags.

There are specialist organisations that can give you information specific to your condition (see page 123).

Stoma supplies

Make sure that you have enough stoma supplies with you. It is a good idea to split them between different items of luggage, in case any get lost. Pack essential supplies in your hand luggage, where you can reach them easily.

If you pack about twice the amount of your normal supplies, this helps you to be prepared. You may need to change your stoma bag more often than usual, or you may be away for longer than planned. It is especially important to take extra supplies if you are going somewhere hot.

Check if your accommodation has a private bathroom, with facilities to dispose of stoma bags, if you think you need this.

Some stoma suppliers deliver abroad. Check whether your supplier offers this service before you travel. Store stoma bags in a cool place, away from direct sunlight. Use bottled or boiled water or wet wipes to clean around your stoma.

Travelling if you have a colostomy or ileostomy

If you have a colostomy or an ileostomy, it is important to be careful about what you eat the day before you travel.

Avoid spicy foods, fizzy drinks, alcohol and foods that cause wind. If you are travelling on a plane, the changes in air pressure may cause increased wind in the stoma bag. It may help to add an extra flatus filter, which helps wind to escape.

Your GP or stoma nurse can advise you on medicines you can take if you have diarrhoea. These may include anti-diarrhoea medicines and rehydration powders. You can buy these in a pharmacy or supermarket, or your GP can prescribe them.

If the diarrhoea is severe or continues for more than 48 hours, it is important to see a doctor.

Insurance and travel certificates

A travel certificate includes details of your medical condition. This means that you do not have to explain your condition to travel officials, such as airport security staff. The certificate sets out your name, address and passport number, and is signed by your doctor.

You can order a travel certificate from Stomawise. You only need to pay the cost of postage (see page 124).

If you have an ileostomy, you can get a travel certificate in different languages by contacting IA (Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association). Colostomy UK and the Urostomy Association can provide travel certificates in different languages. Your stoma care nurse should also be able to give you a travel certificate.

Some organisations have information on travel insurance (see pages 120 to 124). It is important to make sure you are properly covered for your condition.

If you have bowel or bladder problems

You may need to empty your bladder (pass urine or wee) or bowels (pass stools or poo) urgently or more often. These problems may be temporary or long term and can be caused by treatment or the cancer itself. They should not stop you from travelling and enjoying your holiday, but planning ahead can help.

If you have bowel or bladder problems, you need to be close to a toilet. This can affect your travel plans.

Access to toilets

When arranging any type of travel, try to book an aisle seat that is close to a toilet. This makes it easier for you during the journey. It is also a good idea to have a bag of hand luggage with some supplies inside.

Before your trip, ask if your accommodation has a private bathroom. If you are travelling somewhere unfamiliar, it is a good idea to find out more about the toilet facilities there. They may be different to what you would expect.

Some local authority websites in the UK have lists or maps of local public toilets. You can also look up what public toilets are available on the Great British Public Toilet Map at toiletmap.org.uk

We can send you a toilet card, which may help you get access to a toilet more quickly when you are out in public. The card explains that you have a medical condition and need urgent access to a toilet. It can be used in places such as shops and pubs.

You can order the card online at be.macmillan.org.uk or by calling us on **0808 808 00 00** (7 days a week, 8am to 8pm). You can use disabled toilets too. These often have a sink and give you more privacy and space if you need to change.

The National Key Scheme (NKS) offers people with a disability (including cancer) access to public disabled toilets across the UK. You can buy a Radar key for £4.75 (including postage and packaging) from Disability Rights UK – see page 124. In Northern Ireland, you can buy these keys at any local council office.

Take supplies with you

Pack a bag of the things you may need when travelling. This helps you feel more confident.

You may want to include:

- wet wipes or baby wipes
- barrier cream to protect the skin from damage or infection, such as Cavilon® or Sudocrem®
- pads and extra pants
- antibacterial gel or hand wash
- a change of clothing
- sealable and disposable bags.

If you have bladder problems, you may find it helpful to take a portable urinal with you. This is a light bottle where you can empty your bladder if you cannot get to a toilet in time.

Talk to your cancer nurse or specialist for advice on travelling. You can ask them whether any medicines, such as anti-diarrhoea tablets, may be helpful for you.

Flying if you have a tracheostomy or laryngectomy

Having a tracheostomy or laryngectomy (surgery to remove part or all of your voice box) should not stop you from travelling. However, you should check with your doctor whether it is safe to travel if you have had surgery recently (see page 13).

When you breathe through a stoma (an opening in your windpipe), air goes straight into your lungs. It is not warmed or moistened by your mouth and nose. The cooler, drier air can irritate your lungs and make you produce more mucus (phlegm). This can be a problem on a plane, where the air is very dry.

Here are some tips to look after your airway when flying:

- Drink plenty of water during the flight and avoid having too much alcohol or caffeine, which can make you dehydrated.
- Keep your stoma covered with a stoma cover or filter to warm and moisten the air. This is also called a heat and moisture exchanger (HME).
- Keep your stoma cover moist with a small mist spray bottle or saline (a solution of salt in water).

You may need to pack an electrolarynx (a device to produce clearer speech) or a voice amplifier (a device to make your voice louder), and extra batteries.

Contact your airline in advance if you need to use oxygen while you are on the plane. Also check their policy on bringing medical equipment (see pages 72 to 73).

A nebuliser is a machine that helps you breathe in medicine as a mist through a mask or mouthpiece. This could help you clear your airway, especially in the dry air on a plane. You could ask your healthcare professional if there are options for hiring or borrowing a portable (lightweight) nebuliser.

It is helpful to remind flight attendants that, in an emergency, air should go to your stoma rather than your nose or mouth. You should also explain this to anyone travelling with you. The National Association of Laryngectomy Clubs can send you a free emergency card or wristband (see page 123).



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About our information

We provide expert, up-to-date information about cancer. And all our information is free for everyone.

Order what you need

You may want to order more booklets or leaflets like this one. Visit [be.macmillan.org.uk](https://www.be.macmillan.org.uk) or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

We have booklets about different cancer types, treatments and side effects. We also have information about work, financial issues, diet, life after cancer treatment and information for carers, family and friends.

Online information

All our information is also available online at [macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support) You can also find videos featuring stories from people affected by cancer, and information from health and social care professionals.

Other formats

We also provide information in different languages and formats, including:

- audiobooks
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- easy read booklets
- eBooks
- large print
- translations.

Find out more at [macmillan.org.uk/otherformats](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/otherformats)

If you would like us to produce information in a different format for you, email us at cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Other ways we can help you

At Macmillan, we know how a cancer diagnosis can affect everything, and we're here to support you.

Talk to us

If you or someone you know is affected by cancer, talking about how you feel and sharing your concerns can really help.

Macmillan Support Line

Our free, confidential phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Our cancer support specialists can:

- help with any medical questions you have about cancer or your treatment
- help you access benefits and give you financial guidance
- be there to listen if you need someone to talk to
- tell you about services that can help you in your area.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** or email us via our website, **macmillan.org.uk/talktous**

Information centres

Our information and support centres are based in hospitals, libraries and mobile centres. There, you can speak with someone face to face.

Visit one to get the information you need, or if you'd like a private chat, most centres have a room where you can speak with someone alone and in confidence.

Find your nearest centre at **macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres** or call us on **0808 808 00 00**.

Talk to others

No one knows more about the impact cancer can have on your life than those who have been through it themselves. That's why we help to bring people together in their communities and online.

Support groups

Whether you are someone living with cancer or a carer, we can help you find support in your local area, so you can speak face to face with people who understand. Find out about support groups in your area by calling us or by visiting [macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/selfhelpandsupport)

Online Community

Thousands of people use our Online Community to make friends, blog about their experiences and join groups to meet other people going through the same things. You can access it any time of day or night. Share your experiences, ask questions, or just read through people's posts at [macmillan.org.uk/community](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/community)

The Macmillan healthcare team

Our nurses, doctors and other health and social care professionals give expert care and support to individuals and their families. Call us or ask your GP, consultant, district nurse or hospital ward sister if there are any Macmillan professionals near you.

Book reviews

Our volunteers review many books about cancer. These include people's stories of living with cancer, and books for children. Visit [publications.macmillan.org.uk](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/publications) and search 'book reviews'.

'Everyone is so supportive on the Online Community, they know exactly what you're going through. It can be fun too. It's not all just chats about cancer.'

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Help with money worries

Having cancer can bring extra costs such as hospital parking, travel fares and higher heating bills. If you've been affected in this way, we can help.

Financial guidance

Our financial team can give you guidance on mortgages, pensions, insurance, borrowing and savings.

Help accessing benefits

Our benefits advisers can offer advice and information on benefits, tax credits, grants and loans. They can help you work out what financial help you could be entitled to. They can also help you complete your forms and apply for benefits.

Macmillan Grants

Macmillan offers one-off payments to people with cancer. A grant can be for anything from heating bills or extra clothing to a much-needed break.

Call us on **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a financial guide or benefits adviser, or to find out more about Macmillan Grants.

We can also tell you about benefits advisers in your area. Visit **macmillan.org.uk/financialsupport** to find out more about how we can help you with your finances.

Help with work and cancer

Whether you're an employee, a carer, an employer or are self-employed, we can provide support and information to help you manage cancer at work. Visit **macmillan.org.uk/work**

Work support

Our dedicated team of work support advisers can help you understand your rights at work. Call us on **0808 808 00 00** to speak to a work support adviser (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).

Macmillan Organiser

This includes a records book to write down information such as appointments, medications and contact details. You can also download the app on IOS or Android.

Other useful organisations

There are lots of other organisations that can give you information or support.

Travel support

Association of British Travel Agents

Tel 020 3117 0599

(Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4.30pm)

www.abta.com

Provides information about travelling abroad, including tips on accessible travel.

Has a checklist to help travel companies understand your needs if you have problems moving around.

Care Quality Commission

Tel 03000 61 61 61

www.cqc.org.uk

The independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. Lists private travel clinics on their website and gives them a quality rating.

Family Holiday Association

Tel 020 3117 0650

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

Email info@fhaonline.org.uk

www.

familyholidayassociation.org.uk

Arranges UK seaside breaks and day trips for families who are affected by problems, such as an illness or disability. Families must have a low household income and a child or children under 18.

Fit for Travel

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

A free website maintained by Health Protection Scotland. This website gives the public up-to-date health information on avoiding illness and staying healthy when travelling abroad.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Tel 020 7008 1500

Email

fcocorrespondence@fco.gov.uk

www.fco.gov.uk

The government department responsible for supporting British citizens abroad.

Home Office Drugs and Firearms Licensing Unit

Tel 020 7035 6330

Email

dflu.ie@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-licences-fees-and-returns

Provides a personal medicines licence if you are travelling with certain medicines for more than 3 months or carrying more than 3 months' supply.

National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC)

Advice line for health professionals 0845 602 6712

Email

uclh.htdtravelclinic@nhs.net

www.travelhealthpro.org.uk

A service run by Public Health England. Provides travel health information free of charge for travellers and health professionals. Your GP can refer you on the NHS to a travel medicine specialist at the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London.

Tourism For All

Tel 0845 124 9971

Email info@tourismforall.org.uk

www.tourismforall.org.uk

Gives information to people with disabilities and older people about accessible accommodation and things to do across the UK.

Travel insurance

British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA)

Tel 0370 950 1790

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 5.30pm)

www.

biba.org.uk/find-insurance

Can help you find travel insurance brokers that can look for travel insurance on your behalf.

Insurancewith

Tel 020 8103 8275

www.

insurancewith.com/charity

A travel insurance company, which specialises in covering people with medical conditions. Meets Macmillan's standards of providing appropriate cover for people with cancer.

Post Office

Tel 0330 123 3690

www.postoffice.co.uk/travel-insurance/medical-conditions

Offers several types of travel insurance cover and considers all medical conditions. Meets Macmillan's standards of providing appropriate cover for people with cancer.

Support organisations

Bladder and Bowel Community

Tel 01926 357 220

Home Delivery Service

0800 031 5406

Email

help@bladderandbowel.org

www.bladderandbowel.org

A UK-wide service for people with bladder and bowel control problems. Provides information and support for anyone affected by these conditions and their families, carers and healthcare professionals. Can send you a free toilet access card

Breast Cancer Now

Tel 0808 800 6000

www.breastcancer.org

Provides information and emotional support to anyone affected by breast cancer.

British Lung Foundation

Helpline 03000 030 555

(Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm)

www.blf.org.uk

Supports people with a lung condition. Has a 'Going on holiday' section on their website. This includes information about insurance, flying and oxygen.

Colostomy UK**Helpline** 0800 328 4257

(Daily, 24hrs)

Email info@colostomyuk.org**www.colostomyuk.org**

Provides support and advice to people living with a colostomy, their families, carers and friends. Publishes a Travel Advice booklet, holiday checklist and specialist information about travel insurance for people with a stoma.

Can provide a travel certificate in different languages.

IA (the Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association)**Tel** 0800 018 4724**Email** info@iasupport.org**www.iasupport.org**

Supports people living with an ileostomy or internal pouch, their family, friends and carers. Has travel tips and specialist information about travel insurance for people with a stoma on their website.

Can provide a travel certificate in different languages.

Lymphoedema**Support Network (LSN)****Tel** 020 7351 4480

(Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4.30pm)

Email admin@lsn.org.uk**www.lymphoedema.org**

Gives information and support to people with lymphoedema, and produces a factsheet called Holidays and Travel.

Can send you a medical alert card or bracelet.

The National Association of Laryngectomee Clubs (NALC)**Tel** 020 7730 8585**Email**info@laryngectomy.org.uk**www.laryngectomy.org.uk**

Offers UK-wide support to people who have had a laryngectomy and their families and carers. Has almost 100 clubs across the UK. Publishes a Handbook for Laryngectomy Patients, which includes travel tips.

Can send you a free emergency card or wristband.

Stomawise

Tel 0843 849 7459

Email admin@stomawise.co.uk

www.stomawise.co.uk

An internet-based support network for people living with a stoma. The website has information on travelling, buying travel insurance and getting stoma supplies outside the UK. You can order a travel certificate from this organisation or post comments, including travel tips, on their forum.

The Urostomy Association

Tel 01386 430 140

Email [info@](mailto:info@urostomyassociation.org.uk)

urostomyassociation.org.uk

www.

urostomyassociation.org.uk

Provides support to people who have a urostomy. Has information on travel and insurance on their website. Can provide a travel certificate in different languages.

Equipment and advice on living with a disability

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

Helpline 0300 999 0004

(Mon to Fri, 10am to 4pm)

www.dlf.org.uk

Provides free, impartial advice about all types of disability equipment and mobility products.

Disability Rights UK shop

Tel 020 3687 0790

Email

shop@disabilityrightsuk.org

www.

disabilityrightsuk.org/shop

You can order a Radar key for £4.75, including postage. This gives you access to UK public disabled toilets.

LGBT-specific support

LGBT Foundation

Tel 0345 330 3030

(Mon to Fri, 10am to 6pm)

Email helpline@lgbt.foundation

www.lgbt.foundation

Provides a range of services to the LGBT community, including a helpline, website, email advice and counselling.

Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate and up to date, but it should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this publication, or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it. Some photos are of models.

Thanks

This booklet has been written, revised and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been approved by our Chief Medical Editor, Prof Tim Iveson, Macmillan Consultant Medical Oncologist.

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Thanks also to the people affected by cancer who reviewed this edition, and those who shared their stories.

We welcome feedback on our information. If you have any, please contact **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk**

Sources

We have listed a sample of the sources used in the booklet below.

If you would like more information about the sources we use, please contact us at **cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk**

Fit for Travel. fitfortravel.nhs.uk (accessed June 2019).

GOV.UK. Drugs licensing. Available from gov.uk/guidance/controlled-drugs-licences-fees-and-returns (accessed April 2019).

Jane Chiodini, Travel Health Specialist Nurse. www.janechiodini.co.uk (accessed April 2019).

National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC). travelhealthpro.org.uk (accessed June 2019).

NHS. Apply for a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Available from www.nhs.uk/ehic (accessed November 2019).

Can you do something to help?

We hope this booklet has been useful to you. It's just one of our many publications that are available free to anyone affected by cancer. They're produced by our cancer information specialists who, along with our nurses, benefits advisers, campaigners and volunteers, are part of the Macmillan team. When people are facing the toughest fight of their lives, we're there to support them every step of the way.

We want to make sure no one has to go through cancer alone, so we need more people to help us. When the time is right for you, here are some ways in which you can become a part of our team.



Share your cancer experience

Support people living with cancer by telling your story, online, in the media or face to face.

Campaign for change

We need your help to make sure everyone gets the right support. Take an action, big or small, for better cancer care.

Help someone in your community

A lift to an appointment. Help with the shopping. Or just a cup of tea and a chat. Could you lend a hand?

Raise money

Whatever you like doing you can raise money to help. Take part in one of our events or create your own.

Give money

Big or small, every penny helps. To make a one-off donation see over.

Call us to find out more

0300 1000 200

macmillan.org.uk/getinvolved

Please fill in your personal details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other _____

Name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please accept my gift of £ _____

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I enclose a cheque / postal order /
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Macmillan Cancer Support

OR debit my:

Visa / MasterCard / CAF Charity
Card / Switch / Maestro

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Don't let the taxman keep your money

Do you pay tax? If so, your gift will be worth 25% more to us – at no extra cost to you. All you have to do is tick the box below, and the tax office will give 25p for every pound you give.

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Macmillan Cancer Support and our trading companies would like to hold your details in order to contact you about our fundraising, campaigning and services for people affected by cancer. If you would prefer us not to use your details in this way please tick this box.

In order to carry out our work we may need to pass your details to agents or partners who act on our behalf.



If you'd rather donate online go to macmillan.org.uk/donate

Please cut out this form and return it in an envelope (no stamp required) to:
Supporter Donations, Macmillan Cancer Support, FREEPOST LON15851,
89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ

This booklet is about travelling abroad when you have cancer. There is also information for family, friends and carers.

The booklet talks about the benefits of travel and how you can prepare for a trip abroad. It also gives tips on finding travel insurance and taking care while you are away.

We're here to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as they can, providing physical, financial and emotional support. So whatever cancer throws your way, we're right there with you. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call **0808 808 00 00** or visit **macmillan.org.uk**

Would you prefer to speak to us in another language? Interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use. Are you deaf or hard of hearing? Call us using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app.

Need information in different languages or formats? We produce information in audio, eBooks, easy read, Braille, large print and translations. To order these, visit **macmillan.org.uk/otherformats** or call our support line.

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