



Keeping Children and Families Safe and Healthy on Holiday

With the summer holidays approaching, many families will be travelling abroad. A little forward planning can help keep you and your family safe, healthy and able to enjoy the trip.

Travel to visit family and friends can still carry health risks, even when returning to a country you have visited many times. Immunity (your body's protection) to certain infections may decrease over time, and exposure to local illnesses can still result in infection.

Taking simple precautions is important for all travellers. This includes practising good food and water hygiene, preventing insect bites, and ensuring vaccinations are up to date. These measures help protect you and your family and reduce the risk of illness while travelling.

Plan Ahead – Start 8 Weeks Before Travel

- Firstly, make sure anyone within the household (children and adults) are up to date with all their routine vaccinations, including MMR/MMRV (**Measles, Mumps, Rubella ± Chickenpox**)
- Get travel health advice at least **8 weeks before you go**
- Book **GP or travel clinic appointments** early
- Ideally allow time for vaccines to **take full effect before your travel. This is usually 4 weeks**

Important to know

- **Measles** infection remains common in many countries
- Some vaccines are **free** on the NHS (Hepatitis A, Polio, Typhoid and Cholera)
- Some vaccines need **more than one dose**
- Some cannot be given at short notice
- Travellers are advised to ensure that they have all recommended vaccinations, even if they are returning to their country of origin

Travel Vaccinations

Some destinations require additional vaccines, even when visiting family or your country of origin.

Some vaccines require booster doses, a few weeks or months later, to ensure continued protection. Make sure your vaccinations are up to date before travelling and on return if advised.

Free on the NHS:

- Polio (given as a combined diphtheria/tetanus/polio jab)
- Typhoid
- Hepatitis A
- Cholera

Available privately for a fee at travel clinics or some pharmacies:

- Hepatitis B
- Japanese encephalitis
- Meningitis (ACWY)
- Rabies
- Tick-borne encephalitis
- Tuberculosis (BCG)
- Yellow fever

Whilst travelling

Heat Health – Keeping Cool

Hot weather can affect children more quickly than adults:

- Offer **plenty of water** and encourage regular drinking
- Dress children in **light, loose clothing**
- Keep them in the **shade**, especially between 11am–3pm
- Use **hats, sunglasses and high SPF sunscreen**
- Avoid outdoor activity during extreme heat

Watch for signs of heat illness:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Feeling sick

 Seek medical help if symptoms are severe.

Mosquito & Insect Protection

Protect against insect bites and ticks whilst travelling:

- Use **child-safe insect and tick repellent**
- Cover arms and legs in the evening or walking through long grass
- Use mosquito nets where advised

Water Safety

Take care around water to prevent accidents and illness:

- Always supervise children
- Avoid swallowing water
- Take care in rivers, lakes and the sea
- Follow local safety advice

Food & Drink Safety

Reduce the risk of tummy bugs by:

- Washing hands regularly
- Drinking **safe (bottled or treated) water**
- Eating **freshly cooked, hot food**
- Avoiding undercooked foods
- Avoiding unpasteurised milk

After You Return Home

If you or your child becomes unwell:

- During travel or after returning home seek medical advice and **tell the doctor when and where you have travelled**
- Or visit www.111.nhs.uk for advice

We wish you and your family a safe, healthy, and enjoyable summer holiday.

Additional Information

Checklist before you travel

Tasks	Yes
Checked routine vaccinations	☐
Sought travel health advice 8 weeks in advance	☐
Booked travel vaccinations for all travelling	☐
Taken steps to all travelling (hand washing, safe food and water, adequate sunscreen, and insect precautions)	☐

- Routine vaccination schedule and when to have them - [NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS](#)
- Travel vaccinations and when to have them, including which ones are free - [Travel vaccinations - NHS](#)
- Posters and translated leaflets: [Find public health resources](#)
- Country-specific travel advice - [NathNac - Country List](#)
- Travellers' diarrhoea - [NathNac - Traveller's' diarrhoea](#)
- Food and water hygiene - [NathNac - Food and water hygiene](#)
- Mosquito Bite avoidance - [Mosquito bite avoidance: advice for travellers - GOV.UK](#)
- Insect and tick bite avoidance - [NathNac - Insect and tick bite avoidance](#)
- NHS heatwave advice: www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/heatwave-how-to-cope-in-hot-weather/
- UKHSA Travel Health Toolkit - [Travel health - Google Drive](#)