

## Immunology

# Can I travel abroad when I have an immunodeficiency?

You have told your doctor that you are planning to travel abroad. The following leaflet aims to provide you with helpful information. Because you have a primary immunodeficiency you need to take more:

- care
- medications
- information
- letters
- insurance

### Advice

A lot depends on the type of immunodeficiency that you have. Leaflets and information available at a local chemist are aimed at people with a fully functioning immune system and may be incorrect for you to follow.

Ask the Immunology Team about any protection that may be appropriate for you. For example: people with antibody deficiencies will not make a response to vaccinations but those with complement deficiencies will.

### Care

Depending on the hygiene in the countries you will be visiting, you may have to be more careful in following basic advice about avoiding food poisoning.

**Avoid** unpeeled fruit and vegetables, salads, shellfish, ice-cream, ice in drinks, undercooked meats and pates. **Choose** meals cooked to order rather than any food that may have been kept warm or just reheated.

**Avoid** tap water, even for cleaning your teeth! **Choose** bottled water and check the seal is intact. If this is unavailable sterilise water by boiling, tablets or filtration. If the water is highly suspect do not use it for washing your hands.

### Medications

Carry a small first aid kit with antiseptic cream and plasters. Prompt treatment of scratches and insect bites could prevent an infection.

Carry insect repellent and if you are going to a malarial area take the correct anti-malarials for that region.

You may be prescribed antibiotics to carry with you in case of an infection. This would allow you to start treatment promptly, although you should still seek medical advice as soon as possible. Make sure you understand what infections the antibiotics are likely to cure.

For example, if you are normally prescribed medication for recurrent chest infections, it may be unsuitable for a bout of diarrhoea.

### **Do you have regular infusions of immunoglobulin?**

If you are only going to be away for a few weeks, let the clinic know. This is so that your infusions can be timed just before you leave and if necessary immediately after your return.

If you normally have infusions of immunoglobulin at home under the home therapy programme, speak to your specialist nurse to discuss management of your infusions whilst you are away. Your hospital doctor may be able to contact a hospital or clinic in the area where you will be staying to make arrangements.

### **Letters**

Most countries will allow you to take in drugs, needles and syringes if you have a letter from a medical practitioner explaining why you need to carry them. Getting the letter translated into the relevant languages for your itinerary is advisable!

### **Information**

Find out as much as you can about health care in the countries you are planning to visit. The Embassy should be able to help. Check out any reciprocal arrangements with the UK and if you are visiting another EEC country carry a form E111, obtainable from a Post Office.

### **Insurance**

Make sure you have adequate cover, especially if travelling to the USA. Advice on travel insurance is available from the Primary Immunodeficiency Association, Alliance House, 12, Caxton Street, London, SW1H 0QS. 0207 976 7640

### **Bon voyage!!**



We are currently working towards a smoke free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Polish

Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem Informacji Pacjenta (Patient Information) pod numerem telefonu: 01223 216032 lub pod adresem [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Portuguese

Se precisar desta informação noutra língua, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio, por favor peça ao departamento que contacte a secção de Informação aos Doentes (Patient Information) pelo telefone 01223 216032 ou através do e-mail [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Arabic

إذا كنت تود الحصول على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، بالأحرف الكبيرة أو بشكل شريط صوتي، يمكنك أن تطلب من القسم الاتصال بمعلومات المريض على الرقم: 01223216032 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني: [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Cantonese

如您需以另一語言版本、特大字體或錄音形式索取本資料，請要求部門聯絡病人諮詢服務：電話 01223 216032，電郵地址 [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Turkish

Eğer bu bilgileri başka bir dilde veya büyük baskılı veya sesli olarak isterseniz, lütfen bulunduğunuz bölümdeki görevlilere söyleyin Hasta Bilgilendirme servisini arasinlar: 01223 216032 veya [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر زبان میں، بڑے الفاظ میں یا آڈیو طریقہ سے درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی اس شعبہ سے پیشینٹ انفارمیشن سے ذیل کے ذریعہ رابطہ کرنے کی درخواست کریں: 01223 216032 یا [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য অন্য কোন ভাষায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও রেকর্ডিং পোতে চান তাহলে 'প্যাশেন্ট ইনফরমেশান' এর সঙ্গে 01223 216032 নম্বরে ফোন করে বা [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk) ঠিকানায় ই-মেইল করে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য ডিপার্টমেন্টটিতে অনুরোধ জানান।

### Document History

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