United Kingdom

Capital City: "London"
Official Language: "English, Scots Gaelic, Welsh"
Monetary Unit: "pound sterling (£)"

General information

The information on these pages should be used to research health risks and to inform the pre-travel consultation.

Travellers should ideally arrange an appointment with their health professional at least four to six weeks before travel. However, even if time is short, an appointment is still worthwhile. This appointment provides an opportunity to assess health risks taking into account a number of factors including destination, medical history, and planned activities. For those with pre-existing health problems, an earlier appointment is recommended.

While most travellers have a healthy and safe trip, there are some risks that are relevant to travellers regardless of destination. These may for example include road traffic and other accidents, diseases transmitted by insects or ticks, diseases transmitted by contaminated food and water, sexually transmitted infections, or health issues related to the heat or cold.

All travellers should ensure they have adequate travel health insurance.

A list of useful resources including advice on how to reduce the risk of certain health problems is available below.

Resources
Food and water hygiene
Insect and tick bite avoidance
Personal safety
Sexually transmitted infections
Sun protection

Vaccine recommendations

Details of vaccination recommendations and requirements are provided below.

All Travellers

Travellers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters as recommended in the UK. These vaccinations include for example measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and diphtheria-tetanus-polio vaccine.

Those who may be at increased risk of an infectious disease due to their work, lifestyle choice, or certain underlying health problems should be up to date with additional recommended vaccines. See the individual chapters of the ‘Green Book’ Immunisation against infectious disease for further details.

Certificate Requirements

There are no certificate requirements under International Health Regulations.

Most Travellers

The vaccines in this section are recommended for most travellers visiting this country. Information on these vaccines can be found by clicking on the blue arrow. Vaccines are listed alphabetically.

Tetanus

Tetanus is caused by a toxin released from Clostridium tetani and occurs worldwide. Tetanus bacteria are present in soil and manure and may be introduced through open wounds such as a puncture wound, burn or scratch.

Prevention

Travellers should thoroughly clean all wounds and seek appropriate medical attention.

Tetanus vaccination

- Travellers should have completed a primary vaccination course according to the UK schedule.
- If travelling to a country where medical facilities may be limited, a booster dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine is recommended if the last dose was more than ten years ago even if five doses of vaccine have been given previously.
Some Travellers

The vaccines in this section are recommended for some travellers visiting this country. Information on when these vaccines should be considered can be found by clicking on the arrow. Vaccines are listed alphabetically.

### Rabies (Bat Lyssavirus)

Although rare, bat lyssaviruses (bat rabies) can be transmitted to humans or other animals following contact with the saliva of an infected bat most often by a bite. The disease can also be transmitted if the saliva of an infected bat gets into open wounds or mucous membranes (such as on the eye, nose or mouth). Bat lyssaviruses can cause disease in humans that is indistinguishable from rabies.

Symptoms can take some time to develop, but when they do the condition is almost always fatal.

The risk to most travellers is low. However, it is increased for certain occupations for example bat handlers and veterinarians, or certain activities such as caving.

### Bat Lyssavirus in the United Kingdom

Rabies has **not** been reported in domestic or wild animals in this country; therefore most travellers are considered to be at low risk. However, bats may carry bat lyssavirus (bat rabies).

### Prevention

- Travellers should avoid contact with bats. Bites from bats are frequently unrecognised. Rabies like disease caused by bat lyssaviruses is preventable with prompt post-exposure rabies treatment.
- Following a possible exposure, wounds should be thoroughly cleansed and an urgent local medical assessment sought, even if the wound appears trivial. Although rabies has not been reported in other animals in this country, it is sensible to seek prompt medical advice if bitten or scratched. It is possible, although very rare for bats to pass rabies like viruses to other animals including pets.
- Post-exposure treatment and advice should be in accordance with national guidelines.

### Rabies vaccination

- Pre-exposure rabies vaccinations are recommended for those who are at increased risk due to their work (e.g. laboratory staff working with the virus and those working with bats).
- Pre exposure vaccines could be considered for those whose activities put them at increased risk of exposure to bats.

A full course of pre-exposure vaccines simplifies and shortens the course of post-exposure treatment and removes the need for rabies immunoglobulin which is in short supply world-wide.

Rabies in brief

**Latest News: United Kingdom**