

Summer Travel

Heading off for a summer break? Check out our guide to staying safe and healthy abroad

Before you go

Check the [Foreign Office country pages](#) for the latest travel advice and see our [country pages](#) for current health risks at your destination, including any vaccine and malaria advice.

Visit your GP or travel clinic at least four to six weeks before you go. This gives you time to check that your routine UK vaccines are up to date and get any recommended travel vaccines and malaria tablets.

Going on a last minute holiday? It's not too late - vaccines can be given at short notice and malaria tablets (if needed) can be started the day you go.

Get comprehensive travel health insurance that covers everything you want to do and any health conditions that you have.

Even if you are going to Europe and have already got a free [European Health Insurance Card](#) (EHIC) check it is still valid and has not expired. Remember - an EHIC only gives you access to basic emergency care and you still need your own [travel insurance](#).

Take a basic first kit including items like pain relief, gauze, antiseptic, tape, plasters and tweezers.

While you are away

- [Alcohol](#) - eat before you start drinking and have plenty of water and soft drinks. Remember, drinks may be stronger than at home and hot weather might make you more susceptible to the effects of alcohol. Avoid alcohol sold in unlicensed places like street markets. Never accept drinks from strangers or leave your drink unattended.

Try to moderate your intake: alternating every alcohol with a soft drink is a great way to reduce your alcohol consumption and stay hydrated. Don't do something you regret - too much alcohol can reduce your inhibitions, may put your health at risk and increases your chance of having an accident or doing something risky.

Never drink and drive or swim after drinking.

- [Stay safe](#) - take care on and around balconies and water - never dive into a swimming pool from a balcony. Follow local advice about tides and don't swim on your own or after drinking alcohol. Always wear a helmet if riding a horse, bicycle or motorbike/moped. Avoid driving at night.
- [Blood-borne infections](#) - body piercing, tattoos, illegal drug use and unprotected sex all carry the risk of blood borne illnesses like HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. It's best to get tattoos or body piercing done safely at home, but if you decide to have them abroad, always check sterile, single use needles are used and disposed of carefully after each procedure.
- [Diarrhoea](#) can mess up your plans - so be prepared. Visit a chemist before you go to stock up on over the counter diarrhoea treatments. Remember to drink plenty of fluids and if you have diarrhoea with blood and/or fever, see a doctor straight away.
- [Food and water](#) - be careful with what you eat and drink and follow basic hygiene rules.
- [Insects and ticks](#) can be a problem, with bites causing irritation. In some countries, insects and ticks can also spread diseases, so reduce your risk by covering up, using insect repellents and stay in air-conditioned accommodation whenever possible.
- [Safer sex](#) - carry condoms and practice safer sex by using a new one for every sexual encounter.
- [Sun protection](#) - use an SPF sunscreen of at least 30 UVA/UVB and reapply frequently, especially after swimming, wear a hat and sunglasses.

When you get home

Get urgent medical attention if you have any fever or flu like symptoms and remember to tell your doctor you have been abroad. This is especially important if you have been to countries with malaria, as an urgent malaria test must be arranged, even if you took malaria tablets and have been home for a while.

If you had unprotected sex while you were away or think you might have a sexually transmitted infection, go to a free, confidential [sexual health clinic](#) for advice.

Resources

- [Association of British Travel Agents: Top tips for swimming safely](#)
- [Association of British Travel Agents: Quad bike and moped safety](#)
- [Association of British Travel Agents/Foreign Office: Balcony Safety](#)
- [Drinkaware: Staying safe on holiday](#)
- [Drinkaware: The dangers of fake alcohol](#)
- [European Health Insurance Card](#)
- [Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Foreign travel checklist](#)
- [Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Travel tips and advice if you're heading to a music festival abroad](#)
- [NHS Wales: Safer sex on holiday](#)
- [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: Driving Abroad Tips](#)
- [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: Staying Safe on Holiday](#)

REFERENCES

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