

30 May 2019

## Travelling to celebrate Pride

### A reminder for travellers to international Pride events to be aware of sexual health risks

NaTHNaC is advising travellers to all international Pride celebrations to be aware of and protect themselves against potential health risks, particularly [sexually transmitted infections](#) (STIs).

[EuroPride](#) takes place from 1-16 June in Vienna.

In the United Kingdom, the impact of STIs is highest in gay and bisexual men, and other men who have sex with men (MSM). In 2017, approximately 422,000 STIs were diagnosed in England, with syphilis cases continuing to rise [1]. It is also recognised that gonorrhoea is at risk of becoming an untreatable STI due to the ongoing [threat of antimicrobial resistance](#) [2].

Public Health England is reminding gay and bisexual men to get hepatitis A vaccine and practice good hygiene before and after sex, to protect themselves against serious illnesses such as hepatitis A and shigella infection.

In an outbreak that was first reported in June 2016, cases of hepatitis A have been reported in European residents, predominantly in MSM. Between June 2016 and March 2018, there were 4,010 outbreak-confirmed cases across Europe. The outbreak peaked in March 2017 and some of the cases had attended Pride events in Europe [3]. This number is likely to be an underestimate [4]. Outbreaks of [Shigella \(dysentery\)](#) have also been linked to person-to-person spread among MSM [5].

## Advice for travellers

All travellers should be aware of the range of infections that can be passed through sexual contact. These include hepatitis A, Shigella and other gastrointestinal organisms (germs) that can cause abdominal pains, diarrhoea, jaundice, nausea and vomiting. Hepatitis A and Shigella are predominantly spread through contaminated food and water, as well as by direct contact with an infected person, including during sex [6]. Hepatitis A vaccine is very effective in preventing infection, but there is no vaccine to prevent Shigella.

To have a healthy Pride, ensure you follow [good food, water and personal hygiene recommendations](#), follow [safer sex advice](#) and make an appointment with your practice nurse, sexual health clinic, or healthcare provider prior to travelling. If you are at risk of hepatitis A, ask for hepatitis A vaccination before travelling.

[Information on avoiding sexual spread of hepatitis A](#) and [Shigella](#) is available from the Terence Higgins Trust/Public Health England.

Any travellers who had unprotected sex or think they might have been exposed to an STI should get advice from a [sexual health clinic](#) as soon as possible.

## Advice for health professionals

All MSM planning to attend international Pride celebrations should be offered hepatitis A vaccine before travel. Country specific advice, including specific advice on vaccinations, is available on our [Country Information pages](#).

## Resources

- [NHS Choices: Sex activities and risk](#)
- [Public Health England: Shigella: leaflet and poster for men who have sex with men](#)
- [Terence Higgins Trust: Improving your sexual health](#)
- [Sexually transmitted infections](#)

## References

1. [Public Health England. New data reveals 420,000 cases of STIs diagnosed in 2017. 5 June 2018. \[Accessed 30 May 2019\]](#)
2. [Public Health England. Sexual and reproductive health and HIV: applying All Our Health. 25 January 2018. \[Accessed 30 May 2019\]](#)
3. [Beebeejaun K et al. Outbreak of hepatitis A associated with men who have sex with men \(MSM\), England, July 2016 to January 2017. Eurosurveillance 2012 Vol 22:5. \[Accessed 30 May 2019\]](#)
4. [European Centre for Disease Control. Epidemiological update: hepatitis A outbreak in the EU/EEA mostly affecting men who have sex with men. 23 March 2018. \[Accessed 30 May 2019\]](#)
5. [Public Health England. Shigella: guidance, data and analysis. The diagnosis, management and epidemiology of shigellosis \(bacillary dysentery\). 4 January 2019. \[Accessed 30 May 2019\]](#)
6. [NHS Choices. Sexual health for gay and bisexual men. 29 July 2016. \[Accessed 30 May 2019\]](#)