

28 Jul 2020

## Travelling to Europe?

### Travel health reminder for travellers to mainland European countries

COVID-19 continues to be reported in mainland Europe [1]. All travellers should ensure they are aware of UK COVID-19 current guidance and check the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) for the latest travel advice, including any travel restrictions and requirements relating to COVID-19 in the country they are travelling to. Further information is also available here: [COVID-19: Travel advisory notice update](#).

Travellers should also contact their airline, tour operator, cruise line or other transport and accommodation providers before travel for specific information about their journey. However, please note that as of 9 July 2020, the [FCO advises British nationals against cruise ship travel](#) at this time.

For travel health advice, including current health risk at specific destinations and vaccine advice see our [Country Information](#).

Most travellers visiting mainland Europe have an enjoyable trip without health issues. However, some general health risks when travelling should be also be considered. These include road traffic accidents, illnesses spread by contaminated food and water, sexually transmitted infections and health problems linked to hot weather. For more advice see our [general advice for travellers](#).

In mainland Europe, various diseases spread by insects and ticks are a risk to travellers, depending on their travel plans. Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) is an infection usually spread by tick bites, but humans can also get infected by consuming unpasteurised dairy produce [2]. In April 2020, the French regional health authorities in Rhone-Alpes-Provence, south eastern France reported an outbreak of [tick-borne encephalitis](#) (TBE) linked to the consumption of raw (unpasteurised) goats milk cheese and milk [3].

Further information is available in our factsheet: [Diseases transmitted by insects and ticks in Europe](#).

Rabies, a potentially fatal virus is spread by contact with saliva from wild or domestic animals, including pets and is a risk in some European countries [4]. Bats also carry a type of rabies, so all bat bites and scratches should be considered a potential rabies risk.

[Heatwaves](#) are a risk across Europe this summer, with extreme temperatures being reported across Europe [5].

## Advice for travellers

Be aware of current UK COVID-19 travel guidance and check possible restrictions; see our [COVID-19 general advice for travellers](#). Once abroad, make sure you follow your destination country's rules regarding COVID-19 prevention and be mindful that they may be different to the UK.

Check our [Country Information](#) for specific guidance about your destination, including COVID-19 updates, vaccine recommendations and risk of insect or tick-borne diseases.

Ensure you have any appropriate travel vaccines and are in date for all routine vaccines [recommended in the UK](#), including [measles-mumps-rubella \(MMR\)](#).

Arrange appropriate, comprehensive [travel health insurance](#) before you go. If you are visiting European Economic Area (EEA) countries, remember that [European health insurance cards \(EHIC\)](#) are only valid until 31 December 2020. After this, validity will depend on any arrangements the UK makes with individual countries. You can check the [GOV.UK](#) website for updates and advice about EHIC arrangement for UK travellers.

Follow good [food and water hygiene](#) recommendations and be aware of the risk of [travellers' diarrhoea](#).

Follow [insect and tick bite avoidance advice](#) and seek prompt advice for any unusual symptoms - especially fever. Avoid all unpasteurised dairy products.

**Rabies** - avoid contact with animals, but if you are bitten or scratched by an animal abroad or if an animal licks broken skin:

- immediately flush the wound/area under a running tap for several minutes, then thoroughly wash with soap/detergent and water to remove saliva.
- apply disinfectant like 70% alcohol or iodine solution and cover wound with a simple dressing.
- if saliva gets into your eyes, nose or mouth, wash your face thoroughly as soon as possible.
- get urgent medical help, even if the wound or incident seems very trivial.
- prompt post-exposure rabies treatment is needed in [risk areas](#) even if you have already had a full pre-exposure vaccine course (further vaccine doses are needed for full protection). If you had rabies vaccine before you travelled carry your vaccine record.

Use effective [sun protection](#) and be prepared to deal with [extreme temperatures](#).

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms whilst abroad: a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss of, or change in your normal sense of taste or smell, check where to get medical help locally and contact your travel insurance provider. You must follow the advice of local authorities at your destination country.

The emergency service number in [European Union countries is 112](#). If you are travelling to European countries outside the European Union, make sure you know what the emergency services number is.

Make sure you are informed about [current UK entry requirements](#) before you return.

From 10 July 2020, you will not have to self-isolate if you are arriving and staying in England from a country or territory on the [travel corridors list](#).

## After travel

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms after returning to the UK, you must self-isolate and [get a COVID-19 test](#) as soon as possible. Contact NHS111 if your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after seven days. If you have internet access contact [NHS 111 online](#) otherwise call NHS 111. In Wales and Northern Ireland call NHS 111. In Scotland, phone your GP or NHS24 (111).

Seek medical advice if you have fever on its own or with other symptoms, such as rash after travelling. This could be an infection other than COVID-19. Remember to tell your doctor which European country/region you visited, and what you did on the trip.

## Resources

- [COVID-19: resources](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): general advice for travellers](#)
- [NHS - Heatwave: how to cope in hot weather](#)
- [NHS: Sex activities and risk](#)
- [Rabies](#)
- [Summer travel](#)
- [Sun protection](#)

## References

1. [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. COVID-19 situation update for the EU/EEA and the UK, as of 27 July 2020. \[Accessed 28 July 2020\]](#)
2. [TravelHealthPro. Tick-borne encephalitis. 27 April 2017. \[Accessed 28 July 2020\]](#)
3. [Agence régionale de santé Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. Foyer de cas d'encéphalite à tiques dans l'Ain. 17 June 2020. \[Accessed 28 July 2020\]](#)
4. [European Centre for Disease Control. Rabies – Annual Epidemiological Report for 2018. 11 November 2019. \[Accessed 28 July 2020\]](#)
5. [Network of European Meteorological Services. Meteoalarm – Weather warnings: Europe. 28 July 2020. \[Accessed 28 July 2020\]](#)