

21 May 2025

Celebrating Pride abroad?

Take care of your health and be aware of your risks at international Pride events

Planning to celebrate Pride abroad in 2025? All festival goers, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) travellers are reminded to protect themselves against infections spread by sexual or other close person-to-person contact. These infections include gonorrhoea, HIV, syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as hepatitis A, hepatitis B and mpox (formerly known as 'monkeypox').

Meeting new people and having new sexual partnerships while abroad at large international festivals are a fairly common experience for many travellers, but having condomless sex with a new or casual partner increases the risk of STIs [1].

Mpox, Shigella and drug resistant gonorrhoea [2, 3] are three STIs where travel-related infections are more common.

Increases in cases of extensively antibiotic-resistant Shigella infections, mainly in gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) have been reported worldwide [4-7]. The symptoms of this infection are similar to food poisoning.

An international mpox outbreak in 2022 spread to over 100 countries worldwide [8]. Mpox cases are still being reported from over 60 countries: [Mpox: affected countries](#).

In the United Kingdom (UK), a rise in difficult to treat, drug resistant cases of [gonorrhoea](#) has been [reported in travellers](#) [9-11]. Gonorrhoea is the second most commonly diagnosed STI in the UK. Most gonorrhoea infections can still be successfully treated, but increased drug resistance means gonorrhoea could become an "untreatable" infection [12].

Advice for travellers

Before you travel

If you are celebrating Pride abroad, make sure you get comprehensive [travel insurance](#).

If you are travelling to mainland Europe, apply for a [United Kingdom \(UK\) Global Health Insurance Card](#) too. This helps you access emergency state healthcare at a reduced rate and may help you get free emergency care in some European countries.

Check the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office [\(FCDO\) travel advice](#) for your destination.

See our [Country Information pages](#) to check health risks, prevention advice and vaccine recommendations for your destination. If appropriate, make an appointment with your practice nurse, pharmacist, sexual health clinic or other healthcare provider for vaccines and health advice before you go.

Make sure you are up to date with any destination-specific travel vaccines and all routine UK

vaccines such as COVID-19, diphtheria, tetanus, polio (DTP) and mumps, measles, rubella ([MMR](#)) vaccines. Consider having vaccines such as those that help protect against human papillomavirus ([HPV](#)), and also consider vaccination against [hepatitis A](#) and [hepatitis B](#) viruses which can be acquired sexually. Outbreaks of hepatitis A have been linked to Pride events in Europe in the recent past [13, 14] and hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccination are available for all GBMSM attending sexual health services. A [vaccine to prevent gonorrhoea will become available in 2025 the UK for eligible people](#) which includes gay and bisexual men.

In the UK, [mpox vaccination](#) was offered to people most likely to be exposed to mpox during the outbreak in 2022. This included some healthcare workers, gay and bisexual men, and people who had close contact with someone with mpox. While the outbreak response mpox vaccination has ceased in England, the vaccine is still currently available for people at risk of mpox in some areas of the UK:

- In England - [Find an mpox vaccination site](#)
- In Northern Ireland - [Vaccination to help protect against mpox](#)
- In Scotland - [Vaccination to help protect against mpox \(monkeypox\)](#)
- In Wales - [Mpox](#)

If condomless sex is likely, discuss [HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis/prevention \(PrEP\)](#) with a sexual health professional before you travel. If appropriate, make sure you have access to contraception.

While you are away

Follow [good hygiene rules](#) to protect yourself and others from respiratory infections: cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands and clean your surroundings.

Many infections can be spread by contaminated food and water - be careful what you eat and drink and follow basic [food hygiene rules](#).

Some infections, like hepatitis A and Shigella, are spread via contaminated food and water, but can also be passed on by direct contact with someone with these infections. This includes sex involving anal contact or contact with faeces. Unlike hepatitis A, there is no vaccine to prevent Shigella. More information about avoiding [sexual spread of hepatitis A](#) and [Shigella](#) is available.

Always be [aware of your risk of STIs](#); carry and use condoms consistently and correctly with all new and casual partners.

While numbers of mpox cases in the UK reported by GBMSM have significantly reduced compared to the peak of the outbreak in 2022, travel-associated cases are still reported every week [15]. It is particularly important [to be aware of symptoms and how you can reduce your risk of mpox infection](#).

Mpox virus does not usually spread easily between people. [Information on how mpox is spread](#) is available in our Topics in Brief article.

UKHSA have advice for people diagnosed with an mpox infection who have been advised to self-isolate: [Mpox \(monkeypox\): people who are isolating at home](#) [17].

When you return

If you are unwell with a fever, flu-like illness, persistent or bloody diarrhoea or any other unusual symptoms e.g. jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin), get urgent medical help. Remember to tell your nurse, doctor or other health professional you recently travelled abroad.

If you have symptoms and are concerned that you may have an STI or are symptom free but had unprotected sex [call NHS 111](#) or visit a [sexual health clinic](#). In the UK, [STI testing](#) is free and confidential.

If you have a rash with blisters and are concerned about mpox infection, do not go to a sexual health clinic without contacting them first. Stay at home and avoid close contact with other people until you have been advised on what you need to do [16, 17].

Resources

- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: STIs in Europe - A problem hiding under the duvet](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: European Test Finder](#)
- [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender foreign travel advice](#)
- [International LGBTQ+ Travel Association: 2025 International Gay Pride Events](#)
- [NHS: Sexual health for gay and bisexual men](#)
- [Terence Higgins Trust: Improving your sexual health](#)
- [UK Health Security Agency: Rise in extremely drug-resistant Shigella in gay and bisexual men](#)
- [UK Health Security Agency: Mpox \(monkeypox\) cases confirmed in England - latest updates](#)
- [UK Health Security Agency: Antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea: staying well while travelling](#)
- [World Health Organization: Global Mpox Trends](#)

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17. [UK Health Security Agency. Mpox: guidance. Information and advice for healthcare professionals and the general public. Last updated 7 May 2025. \[Accessed 21 May 2025\]](#)