

Information about travel vaccines in the NHS

The NHS has reminded GPs to make sure that they follow the existing NHS Regulations around travel vaccines, as these are not always being followed.

Some vaccines are available free on the NHS if they are needed for travel, but others are only available on the NHS for reasons other than travel.

You will need to pay for the travel vaccines that are not available on the NHS. You should not be asked to pay for these vaccines for other reasons.

Aren't all travel vaccines free on the NHS?

Some travel vaccines are free on the NHS to reduce the risk of certain infections being brought back into the country and leading to wider spread. These currently include cholera, polio (mainly given as combined tetanus-diphtheria-polio vaccine), hepatitis A and typhoid.

Which vaccines are not available on the NHS just for the purposes of travel?

The following vaccines may be recommended for travel, but are not available free on the NHS if they are only needed for the purposes of travel:

- Hepatitis B
- Rabies
- BCG
- Meningitis ACWY
- Japanese encephalitis
- Yellow fever
- Tick-borne encephalitis

What does this mean for me if I am planning to travel?

The vaccines listed above will need to be paid for if they are given only for travel. Although you may have had some of these vaccines free in the past, the NHS has asked GPs to make sure that they follow the existing NHS Regulations around travel vaccines in future.

What if I need one of these vaccines for reasons other than travel?

There are many situations where the vaccines listed above are provided free on the NHS.

- Some vaccines are given to certain age groups as part of the NHS vaccination schedule. For example the meningitis ACWY vaccine is given to teenagers and students.
- Some vaccines, such as hepatitis B, are given to people with certain medical conditions, or to those who take part in high-risk activities.
- Some vaccines are needed **very quickly** if you have contact with an infection. For example, you may need a rabies vaccination if you are bitten by a bat in the UK or by another animal overseas.

When these vaccines are recommended by your doctor they should be provided free on the NHS.

Vaccines that are required in the course of your work should normally be organised through your employer.

If you are in any doubt about whether you need a vaccine you should consult your GP.

Where can I find more information and support?

- You can speak to your local pharmacist, GP or practice nurse
- NHS Choices provides advice about all vaccines (including travel) <https://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/category.aspx?CategoryID=67>
- The Patients Association can also offer support and advice: <https://www.patients-association.org.uk/> or call 020 8423 8999

Find out more about the medicines that are being stopped or reduced: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed/>

If you have any questions about travel vaccine prescribing please email them to: england.medicines@nhs.net