



Access to healthcare abroad

www.dh.gov.uk/travellers

Access to healthcare abroad

This leaflet tells you about how you can get healthcare in other countries in the European Economic Area (EEA). It covers:

- leisure or business trips;
- planned treatment;
- living abroad;
- working abroad; and
- studying abroad.

Countries in the EEA are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

There are very few countries outside the EEA where you can get free healthcare.

For details, visit www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.



Visiting another EEA country

If you are going to another EEA country on a leisure or business trip, you'll need a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to access state-provided healthcare that becomes necessary during your visit. The treatment you receive will be at a reduced cost, or sometimes even for free. The quickest way to get an EHIC, which is free, is to apply online at www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

Or, you can phone the EHIC applications line on **0845 606 2030**.



You still need travel insurance

It is important you take out travel insurance as the EHIC does not cover all healthcare costs. For example, it will not cover the cost of your journey back to the UK if you need treatment and need to be sent home.

To apply for an EHIC and for more information, including advice for au pairs, nannies, people in the armed forces and students studying abroad visit www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

Planned treatment

The EHIC only gives you access to healthcare that becomes necessary while you are abroad: it does not allow you to go to another EEA country specifically for treatment. If you want to go to another EEA country for treatment, you should discuss your plans with your local commissioner* before you travel.

This is so you:

- can be certain that they are prepared to fund your treatment;
- know exactly how much money you will get back;
- understand the conditions under which you will be treated abroad; and
- can agree, what happens after you return to the UK.

In certain circumstances, your local commissioner must agree to requests for treatment abroad: for example, if you face 'undue delay' in getting treatment in the UK.

The decision on whether you face 'undue delay' will be made in the first instance by your NHS doctor. For more information on planned treatment abroad, visit www.dh.gov.uk/travellingabroadfortreatment.

Giving birth abroad

If you live in the UK and want to give birth in another EEA country, you should phone the Department for Work and Pensions(DWP) Medical Benefits for more information on: **0191 218 1999**. (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

*In England, the commissioner is a primary care trust, practice-based commissioner or your GP. In Wales: local health boards and Health Commission Wales. In Scotland: the NHS board of where you live. In Northern Ireland: health and social services boards.

Living in another EEA country

If you are going to live in another EEA country but not work, you may be able to get state-provided healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes even for free. To get this, you must be receiving UK:

- State Pension;
- long-term Incapacity Benefit; or
- bereavement benefit.

For more information, phone the DWP International Pension Centre on: **0191 218 7777**. (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm)

If you receive short-term Incapacity Benefit, or have previously worked and paid National

Insurance contributions in the UK, you may qualify for healthcare for a limited period. For more information, phone DWP Medical

Benefits on: **0191 218 1999**. (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm)

The NHS is a residence-based system. If you live abroad, this means you are no longer entitled to medical treatment in the UK under normal NHS rules.

Working in another EEA country

If you are going to work in another EEA country, you will qualify for state-provided health care, at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. This applies if you are working for a UK employer or are self-employed, and you pay National Insurance (NI) contributions and Income Tax in the UK.

If you will be working abroad for more than two years, your employer, or you, if you are self-employed, should phone HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on: **0191 225 4811**. (For form E101 and healthcare form E106.)

If you will be abroad for less than two years, you should apply for an EHIC for healthcare. You will also need form E101 from HMRC.

For more information visit:
www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

Published in partnership with NHS Scotland, NHS Wales and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

If you require further copies of this leaflet either visit www.orderline.dh.gov.uk (enter the product ref code 286580), email dh@prolog.uk.com or

Telephone: 08701 555 455

Textphone: 08700 102 870 (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday)

www.dh.gov.uk/travellers

© Crown copyright 2009

286580/LP