Caythorpe & Ancaster Medical Practice

Patient Information Leaflet:
Medications for use whilst abroad

Travelling out of the country for less than 3 months?

For patients who inform us they will be out of the country for less than 3 months, we will provide sufficient medicines for an existing condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes…) for the period whilst you are away where it is safe to do so. Drugs that require frequent monitoring may not be prescribed where there are safety concerns.

Can I have a "just in case" prescription to take with me?

GPs are not required by their Terms of Service to provide prescriptions for the treatment of a condition that is not present and may arise while the patient is abroad, this also includes sick note requests and appointments.

GPs will only prescribe in this case for potential exacerbations of pre-existing illnesses; E.g. rescue antibiotics for patients who have frequent infections secondary to an underlying lung condition. This does not include patients who are prone to getting other infections e.g. urinary tract infections. Should you fall ill when abroad then the advice is to seek medical advice where you are visiting.

Private GPs may provide private prescriptions if it is clinically appropriate and they can be self-administered safely without medical assessment while abroad. These prescriptions are not free.

I'm abroad – can you prescribe for me?

No – By law, the NHS ceases to have responsibility for the medical care of patients when they leave the UK. Clinicians are also not indemnified or insured to give medical advice or treatment while the patient is outside of the UK. Should you become unwell whilst travelling abroad then you are advised to seek medical assistance in the country you are visiting.

People traveling within Europe should be advised to carry either a UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) (for most people) or a UK European Health Insurance Card (UK EHIC) if you have rights under the Withdrawal Agreement which entitles them to medically necessary state-provided healthcare whilst in a European Union (EU) country or Switzerland.. Not all state healthcare is free within the EU and Switzerland and so you may have to pay for services that you would get for free on

the NHS. For most people, the UK Global Health Insurance Card (UK GHIC) replaces the existing European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for new applications.

Can my family collection a prescription and send it to me abroad?

NHS prescriptions must never be obtained by relatives or friends on behalf of patients who are currently abroad, irrespective of such factors as owning a house in the UK or paying UK taxes.

Patients are responsible for ensuring that any drugs they take into a country conform to local laws Further information is available on the NHS website and the UK government website.

Important Note

Patients should be aware that some drugs commonly prescribed in the UK may be illegal in certain countries and you should check with that countries embassy before you travel. You may need a doctor's letter to carry with you when travelling if you are carrying certain medications. This is something we are able to help you with but it is considered private work and so there will be a fee.