



## Frequently Asked Questions **HIV and Travelling**

This leaflet gives some brief information for people living with HIV about some of the practicalities of travelling.

It is not exhaustive and we advise that you seek further advice if necessary.

### Are there countries I can't travel to if I have HIV?

All Western countries allow you to enter if you have HIV. There may be restrictions around obtaining resident or working visas. For further details about travel restrictions check out:

**[www.hivtravel.org](http://www.hivtravel.org)**

### Should I put my tablets in my suitcase or my hand-luggage?

You should carry your tablets in your hand-luggage. That way, if your bags go missing you will still have your tablets with you. We can give you a letter for you to travel with so that customs officials know that these are important prescribed medications. We will not mention the reason for the medicines in the letter. Please contact the Infection Unit secretary (01382 496456) if you would like a letter giving at least one weeks notice.

### How do I cope with changing time zones and taking my tablets on time?

If you are travelling within one or two time zones (one or two hour's time difference) then you can take your medicines at your usual time. If you are travelling further

away then please contact the HIV nurse specialists on:

**01382 496554**

or the HIV pharmacist:

**[kirsteen.hill@nhs.net](mailto:kirsteen.hill@nhs.net)**

for more detailed advice. Advice may vary for different types of medicines.

### Where can I get travel insurance?

If you do not tell your insurance company that you have HIV then the policy will be invalid. There are many companies who will sell travel insurance to people who have HIV. The Terrence Higgins Trust lists the following specific companies:

#### ■ World First Travel Insurance

Tel: 0845 90 80 161

[www.world-first.co.uk/home/travel-insurance/medical-problems/hiv.aspx](http://www.world-first.co.uk/home/travel-insurance/medical-problems/hiv.aspx)

#### ■ It's So Easy Travel insurance

Tel: 0845 222 2226

[www.hivtravelinsurance.com](http://www.hivtravelinsurance.com)

#### ■ Freedom Insurance

Tel: 01223 446 914

[www.freedominsure.co.uk](http://www.freedominsure.co.uk)

Make sure you get a few quotes and **always check the small print.**

### What should I do if I become unwell abroad?

If you have to seek healthcare abroad please tell the healthcare professionals that you have HIV and if you are taking medicines. It would be helpful to know your most recent viral load and CD4 count. It may also be helpful for them to be given contact details for your specialist team in-case they need other medical details.

### How do I protect myself from other infections?

#### ■ Do I need any special vaccinations just because I have HIV?

There are no travel vaccines specifically recommended for people living with HIV. If you are travelling long distance you will need to get advice about vaccinations that are recommended to everyone travelling there. If you are receiving travel vaccines you will need to ensure these are safe for people with HIV "live" vaccines are not advised.

#### ■ Malaria prophylaxis

If you need to take medicines to prevent malaria, check that they do not interact with your HIV medicines. You can discuss this with the HIV pharmacist.

If you come from an area where malaria is common we would recommend you take prophylaxis against malaria if you return to visit family or friends. You should discuss the most appropriate drug to take with your HIV doctor and GP.

#### ■ Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections

If you are having sexual relationships abroad make sure you take plenty of condoms. Condoms purchased abroad may not be of a suitable quality. Free condoms can be obtained from the HIV and Sexual Health Clinics plus at a variety of Condom Initiative outlets across Tayside (see [www.sexualhealthtayside.org](http://www.sexualhealthtayside.org) for details). Make sure you have a sexual health check-up when you come back.

### For further information about travel:

■ [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

■ [www.aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com)

■ [www.hivtravel.org](http://www.hivtravel.org)