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[www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm)

## Introduction

Having the freedom to be able to travel away from home is very important for people receiving haemodialysis treatment. There are many reasons why you may want to travel. These may include taking a holiday, working, attending a conference or visiting family and friends. If you are planning to travel, temporary dialysis arrangements will need to be organised before you go.

This leaflet gives general advice and tips about dialysing away from home.

## Thinking of dialysing away from home?

If you're thinking of travelling (either in the UK or abroad), you need to plan well in advance so your dialysis treatment can be organised near to where you're going to stay. Before you book your trip please talk to one of your kidney doctors or nurses on the dialysis unit. They will be able to advise you whether you are fit enough to travel and give you information on the next steps.

If you are considering travelling abroad please see the separate leaflet on the 'Risks of dialysing abroad'.

## Tips

- Find out whom at your dialysis unit you need to talk to about dialysing away from home. Each dialysis unit has a link nurse who can provide more information about the steps you need to take. The QE satellite co-ordinator nurses can also help if you are having difficulties sorting out. They may also be able to put you in touch with a patient who has recently dialysed at the unit or in the area that you are thinking about.

- Talk to staff at the earliest opportunity if you are considering dialysing away from home. Most units require you to have blood tests and swabs taken before you go, so it's important to plan well ahead.
- Check that you are fit to travel with dialysis nurse or kidney doctor.
- Ensure your dialysis arrangements at your destination are organised before you book the rest of your trip (e.g. hotels or flights).
- Ask for a copy of the 'Risks of dialysing abroad' if you're considering travelling outside the UK.
- Ensure you take out the necessary travel insurance. It can be more difficult to get travel insurance when you have a long-term condition, so it is a good idea to start looking for travel insurance before you book your trip. Some insurance companies may ask for a 'fit to travel' letter from your kidney doctor that says you are well enough to travel. Specialist insurance companies often cover a wider range of people with long-term conditions but can be expensive. It may be worth shopping around.
- Check if you need to have any special vaccinations.
- Make sure you are aware of any costs involved for your dialysis treatment while away.
- Make arrangements for travel to and from the dialysis unit you will be using while away.

There may be an overall limit placed on us on the maximum number of sessions a year that you can dialyse away from home. If you are approaching that limit then we will discuss it with you at the time.

## When travelling within the UK

If you are planning to travel within the UK, your dialysis unit will help make the arrangements with a dialysis unit near to your destination. Your dialysis treatment will be funded and you will not be expected to pay for it. It is important to know that popular holiday destinations get more requests for temporary haemodialysis than they can accommodate, especially at peak times.

## When travelling within the European Union

The European Union member countries include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK; plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway. Switzerland also operates the same arrangements as the EU countries.

In accordance with the Department of Health's guidance on temporary haemodialysis away from home, UK residents visiting these countries can obtain any medical treatment which becomes necessary, including dialysis treatment, from the state healthcare system. This does not include private dialysis units. Each country has its own rules: in some countries dialysis treatment is free; in some you have to pay some of the cost. For further details see Health Advice for Travellers or visit the website [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers). You will need to apply and hold a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) which offers you access to reduced-cost medical treatment. The cost of dialysis is only covered by units that accept the EHIC. If a country does not accept the EHIC you will be required to pay for your own dialysis treatment.

## When travelling to Australia

Australia is the only country outside the EU and Switzerland in which dialysis is covered. Your dialysis treatment must be arranged in advance at a state dialysis unit

## When travelling to other countries

The majority of countries worldwide have no healthcare agreement with the UK, including those in the Middle East, Africa, most of Asia and South America. When visiting any country other than those in the EU, Switzerland or Australia, you will be responsible for meeting the whole cost of your dialysis treatment.

## When going on a cruise

If you are planning on going on a cruise ship with dialysis facilities onboard, you will be responsible for meeting the whole cost of your dialysis treatment.

## Next steps

If there is a cost associated with your dialysis treatment you will be required to agree the payment arrangements before your trip can be booked. If for any reason there is a need to extend the time away you will also have to pay the cost.

As soon as we receive confirmation that dialysis slots are available at your destination on the dates you have asked for, you can book your travel arrangements. When you have made the arrangements please let the nurse in charge of your dialysis unit know the date of travel and your return date.

About 6-8 weeks before you travel, a set of MRSA swabs will need to be taken to check for infection. If the swabs show

you have an infection it will give us time to treat the infection as you will need to be free from infection before you travel. Further swabs and blood tests will be taken 4 weeks before you go. Your dialysis details and results will then be sent to the dialysis unit you're going to.

If you're on the transplant waiting list you will need to let your transplant co-ordinator your travel details so they can suspend you from the transplant list whilst you are away.

If for any reason you cancel your holiday you must let the dialysis nurses know immediately so that your holiday dialysis bookings can be cancelled. In some cases there is a cancellation charge which will be passed onto you.

## Additional Information

Advice on healthcare abroad is available at:  
[www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers)

To apply for an EHC online go to: [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk) If you are having difficulties with the online application form or need to update your personal details call the automated service on: 0845 606 2030. Alternatively you can contact them at the following address:

EHC Enquiries  
PO Box 1114  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE99 2TL

A leaflet 'Healthcare Advice for Travellers' is available at post offices.

NHS Kidney care have produced a framework which describes the processes for arranging dialysis overseas. Overseas Visitors and Holiday Dialysis: Guidance and Pathways (March 2011) is available at:

[www.kidneycare.nhs.uk/Library/Overseas\\_Visitors\\_and\\_](http://www.kidneycare.nhs.uk/Library/Overseas_Visitors_and_)

Holiday\_Dialysis\_March2011.pdf

EuroDial is an international dialysis organisation dedicated to the care and mobility of dialysis patients in Europe.

Visit the website: [www.eurodial.org](http://www.eurodial.org)

Global Dialysis provides details of holiday and travel information for dialysis patients. Visit the website: [www.globaldialysis.com](http://www.globaldialysis.com)

The National Kidney Federation [www.kidney.org.uk/](http://www.kidney.org.uk/)

West Midlands Renal Network website [www.wmrn.co.uk](http://www.wmrn.co.uk)

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics  
[www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx)

You will also find local information leaflets within the different renal departments. A wide range of patient information leaflet and fact sheets are available through the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Trust website and can be accessed via

[www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm)

## Useful numbers

301 Acute	0121 371 3096
301 Chronic	0121 371 3011
Old Renal Dialysis Unit	0121 627 2910
Aston Cross Dialysis Centre	0121 333 6766
Tipton Dialysis Centre	0121 557 8313
City Hospital Renal Dialysis Unit	0121 507 4014
Kings Norton Dialysis Centre	0121 486 4280
Lichfield Renal Unit	01543 262363
Kidderminster Renal Unit	01562 826370
Hereford Dialysis Centre	01432 277929
Woodgate Valley Dialysis Centre	0121 421 0090
Worcester Dialysis Centre	01905 721 940

The satellite dialysis co-ordinator can be contacted between 08:00-16:00 Monday-Friday on either of the following telephone numbers 07789867899 or 07920278137.

### Reference

Temporary dialysis away from home: funding arrangements for NHS patients resident in England (Department of Health 2007).



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit [www.uhb.nhs.uk](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk) or call 0121 627 7803

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