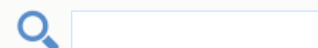


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Patients Travelling Abroad - Prescriptions & Advice

Prescriptions for patients traveling out of the country

By law, the NHS ceases to have responsibility for the medical care of patients when they leave the UK. People traveling within Europe are advised to carry an authorised European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) at all times and this gives entitlement to reduced cost (and sometimes free) medical treatment. Patients should be advised to check specific entitlements prior to travel.

- For patients who will be out of the country for less than 3 months, it is reasonable to provide sufficient medicines for an existing condition (i.e. asthma, diabetes)
- For patients leaving the country for more than 3 months, they should be advised to register with a local doctor for their continuing medical needs. It is reasonable for GPs to provide sufficient medication to give patients time to do this.

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. Persons who have left the UK, or who are intending to leave the UK, for more than 3 months are not normally allowed to continue to be registered with a practice.

The NHS accepts responsibility for supplying ongoing medication for temporary periods abroad of up to 3 months. If a person is going to be abroad for more than three months then all that the patient is entitled to at NHS expense is a sufficient supply of his/her regular medication in order to get to their destination, where they should then find an alternative supply of that medication.

As GPs you do need to be aware of your responsibilities in signing FP10's for patients' travelling abroad, i.e. the resultant monitoring and treatment of the patient's condition and any adverse effects of doing so.

You may be committing fraud in prescribing to patients that are leaving the UK - please note this information carefully.

Advice for patients whilst abroad

The patients location is not an issue and how the practice deal with this is not laid down contractually so it's your decision as a practice. However, whatever you do decide must be consistent and non-discriminatory for all patients.

Under a GMS contract the practice is obliged to make an assessment and then take appropriate action based on that assessment and therefore the practice could triage calls from wherever a patient is.

It may be that your practice decides their policy is that if a patient, following triage, may need to

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be seen within a certain timeframe but cannot get to you that you can't undertake this type of consultation but this would need to be a policy for all patients requesting this.

Your policy may be that you are prepared to offer advice to patients who are purely on holiday for a short period. However, those patients who have moved to reside abroad or are away for a period of 3 months or more should be removed from your patient list.

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