

Policy on Holiday Supply of Medicines for Patients Travelling Abroad

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1.0	13/5/2025	Dr James Thorpe	Vikki Hughes	13/5/2026

Purpose

This policy outlines Empingham Medical Centre's approach to supplying medication for patients who are planning to travel outside of the United Kingdom. It ensures compliance with NHS regulations and safeguards the wellbeing of patients by promoting appropriate medical oversight.

1. General Principles

- Under NHS policy, responsibility for medical care provided by the NHS ends once a patient leaves the United Kingdom.
- GPs are not required under NHS terms of service to prescribe medication for conditions that do not yet exist and may arise while a patient is abroad.
- The NHS allows GPs to provide medication for pre-existing conditions for temporary stays abroad of **up to 3 months**.
- For stays abroad longer than **3 months**, only enough medication to allow the patient to make alternative arrangements upon arrival at their destination may be supplied.

2. Patients Travelling Abroad for Less Than 3 Months

Patients who inform us that they will be travelling abroad for a period **not exceeding 3 months** may receive a prescription for their **regular, ongoing medication** for the duration of their travel, subject to the following conditions:

- Medication must be for a **pre-existing condition** (e.g. asthma, hypertension, diabetes).
 - The medication must be **safe to prescribe in advance** without the need for frequent monitoring (e.g. blood tests or regular review).
 - The **GP has discretion** to assess whether the quantity and type of medication requested can be safely provided in advance.
 - Requests for medication should be made at least **2 weeks prior to travel** to allow for clinical and administrative processing.
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3. Patients Travelling Abroad for More Than 3 Months

Patients who inform us that they intend to leave the UK for a period **longer than 3 months** will be:

- Provided with up to **3 months' supply** of their regular medication, where it is **clinically safe to do so**, to allow them time to make arrangements for ongoing care abroad.
 - Advised that ongoing NHS prescriptions will not be provided after this initial supply.
 - Informed that NHS regulations require patients who reside abroad for more than 3 months to be **removed from the GP practice list**. Patients will be de-registered from Empingham Medical Centre in line with this policy.
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4. Exclusions and Additional Notes

- **Travel vaccines** and preventative medications for travel-related illnesses are not always available on the NHS and may need to be obtained **privately**.
 - Requests for “just in case” medication for potential illnesses while abroad (e.g. antibiotics, anti-diarrhoeals) will generally **not be issued on the NHS** and should be discussed with a travel health provider.
 - Controlled drugs and medications requiring **special monitoring or regulatory restrictions** may not be supplied in advance.
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5. Patient Responsibilities

- Patients are responsible for notifying the practice of travel plans **well in advance** of departure.

- Patients should ensure they understand local regulations about bringing medicines into the country they are visiting.
 - Patients must arrange appropriate travel health insurance and medical care in their destination country.
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6. Review

This policy is reviewed annually or in response to changes in NHS guidelines.