

When abroad

Follow the usual measures to stay free from infection, and remember to wash your hands frequently. Visit www.nhs.uk/Livewell/TravelHealth/Pages/Travelhealthhome.aspx for travel advice by country. Here are our tips:

Food: Be careful with buffets abroad, be it salad or other foods. These foods have generally been uncovered for a certain amount of time and therefore can contain bacteria, especially meat that has been under a heat lamp. Unpeeled fruit and vegetables, salads, raw shellfish, ice-cream and ice cubes, underdone meat and uncooked, cold or reheated foods may be contaminated. Avoid buying food and ice-cream from street sellers.

Water: Tap water abroad can cause illness due to bacteria and different mineral content. Therefore, it is advisable to drink only bottled water when abroad. Make sure that you buy bottled water from a reputable seller, and check the seal has not been broken. If you are not sure, carbonated water is less likely to be bottled tap water, and its alkaline pH helps kill bacteria.

Swimming: Avoid swimming in polluted seas or lakes. This can be a cause of dysentery and respiratory infections, as well as ear, nose and throat infections. Enquire how clean the sea and lakes are. Swimming pool water may also pose a health risk, so ask how often it is monitored for bugs and cleaned.

Find out more at: www.piduk.org/whatarepids/management/travelling

About Primary Immunodeficiency UK

Primary Immunodeficiency UK (PID UK) is a national organisation supporting individuals and families affected by a primary immunodeficiency (PID).

Our website provides useful information on a range of conditions and topics, and explains the work we do to ensure the voice of PID patients is heard.

If we can be of any help, please contact us at hello@piduk.org or on **0800 987 8986**, where you can leave a message.

Visit www.piduk.org for further information.

Support our work by becoming a member of PID UK. It's free and easy to do online at www.piduk.org/register, or just get in touch with us.



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Going
on holiday

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This leaflet provides information to help you plan your holiday when you are affected by a primary immunodeficiency (PID). It gives tips for making your holiday memorable for all the right reasons.

You may also find our leaflet **Insurance matters** useful, because it lists travel insurance companies that are willing to insure those affected by a PID. Enjoy your holiday!

Planning ahead

Just because you have a primary immunodeficiency (PID), it doesn't mean you should stop doing what you enjoy, and that includes going on holiday. Planning ahead will help to ensure that everything goes smoothly and you can enjoy your holiday to the full.

The essentials: Talk to your immunology health team at least three months before you travel.

Tell them where you are going and for how long. They will advise you on what vaccinations you might need, anti-malarial medicines, the medication you should take with you to keep you healthy and how to access emergency treatment while you are away. They may also suggest you reschedule any infusions, to make sure you are in good health for going away.

Remember: Your immunology team will know which vaccinations you might need. Take their advice otherwise you could end up paying for vaccinations that are not necessary because of your particular PID and its treatment.

PID patients cannot receive 'live' vaccines, so be sure to check what is required before you book your holiday. Make sure your travel clinic is aware of your condition and that the 'killed' version of any vaccine must be used.

PID patients must never be given the yellow fever vaccine as it is not available as a killed vaccine.

If, because of your PID, you cannot have a recommended vaccination for the country you are visiting, carry a letter from your doctor explaining why, otherwise border control may not let you in.

Carry a letter explaining your condition

Ask your doctor to write you a letter explaining your condition that you can present to any medical staff you may need to see while on holiday. Ensure this letter also contains clear information on all medication you will have with you, as well as all medical equipment you need to carry for your immunoglobulin therapy. This is essential for airport security and any medical problems you have while abroad. Have the letter in English and consider getting it translated into the language of the country you are visiting.

Think medicines

It is recommended that you take a course of medicines, such as antibiotics, with you. Speak to your doctor and get your prescription in plenty of time. If you take a liquid oral suspension, make sure you discuss this with the pharmacist and explain that you do not want the prescription made up. You will need to ensure a clean supply of sterile water if and when you do need to make up your medicine while away.

Pack the amount of medication you will need for your holiday, plus some extra in case you are delayed when travelling home. Carry your medicines, such as immunoglobulin and antibiotics, in your hand luggage just in case your hold baggage is lost. Keep everything in its original packaging with the prescription labels visible for airport security. Also take an extra copy of your prescription with you as it will be invaluable if you lose your medication or end up in a hospital.

Remember, some medicines, such as benzodiazepines, strong painkillers, such as diamorphine, and some medicines that contain hormones, such as anabolic steroids, come under 'controlled medicines' laws. A personal licence is needed to take these medicines abroad. You must apply for this licence at least 10 working days before you travel, and your GP will need to provide a letter supporting your application.

For more information on taking controlled medicines abroad, visit www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2593.aspx

Pack a first aid kit: Take a small first aid kit with you that contains antiseptic cream and wipes, water sterilisation tablets, insect repellent and a packet of plasters and dressings. In some countries there is a lack of sterile equipment. It is worth taking your own supply of sterile needles and syringes for use by doctors in an emergency. Ask your health team for their advice.

Travelling to Europe: Get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which is valid for five years. You need this in addition to insurance to receive free emergency care in EU countries. Visit www.ehic.org.uk

Insurance: NEVER travel without the appropriate travel insurance, and take the insurance policy with you. Ensure your insurance is up to date and that there have been no changes to your condition to now make your policy void.

Please see our leaflet on insurance for companies that cover people with PIDs.

Contact details: Carry on you the details of your doctors and nurses at home, as well as the 24-hour emergency helpline for your travel insurance company. Visit www.dh.gov.uk/travellers for more information.

Do some research: Establish where a main hospital is located in relation to where you are staying. PID UK can help in providing details of a specialist in the country you are visiting in case of an emergency.

Longer breaks: If you are planning a break longer than three weeks, then you may need to arrange infusions and medicines in the country you are staying in. Talk to your immunology team about this.

