

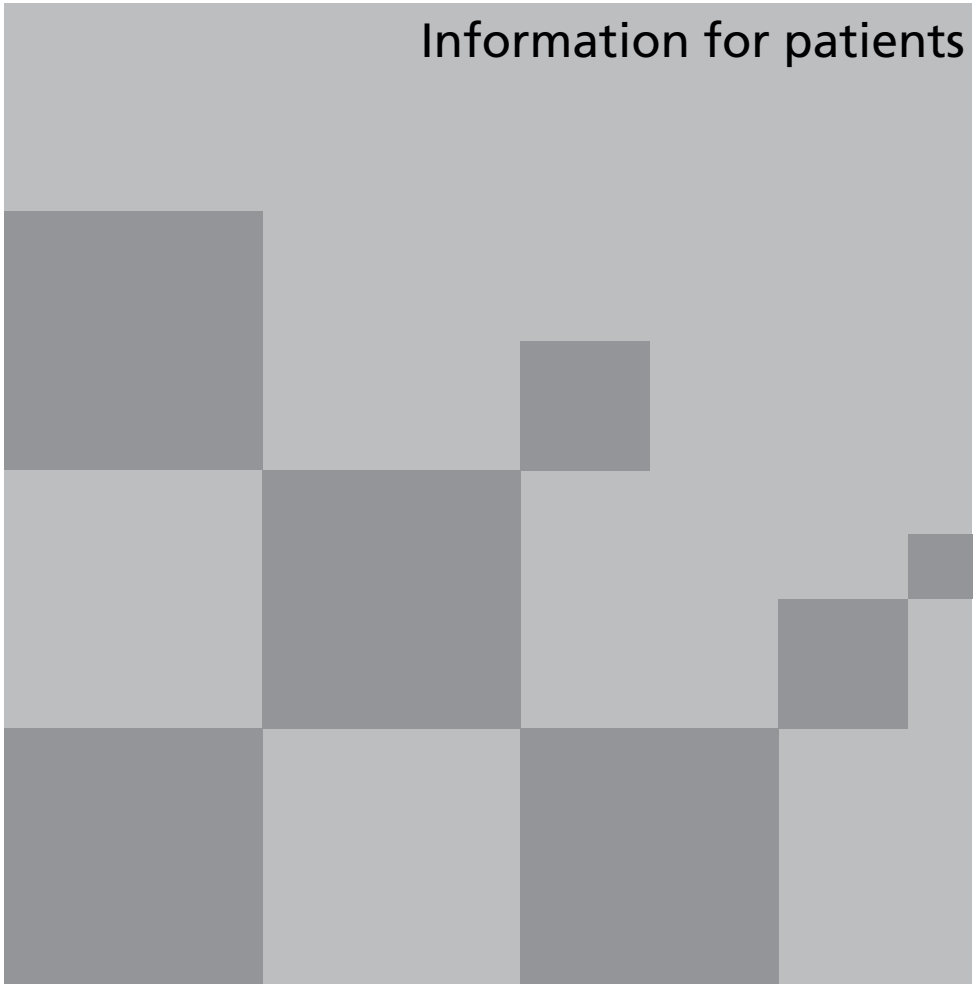


Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Oxford Kidney Unit

What do I do if I'm on dialysis and want to go on holiday?

Information for patients



Being able to travel away from home is important when you are on dialysis. You may wish to travel for work purposes or to attend conferences, or visit family and friends and go on holiday. You **can** travel if you are on peritoneal dialysis or haemodialysis. This leaflet gives you general advice and information about dialysing away from home (Dialysis Away From Base).

What do I need to think about if I want to go on holiday?

Please talk to one of the nurses if you're thinking about going on holiday, as we have lots of experience of helping people on dialysis. You may also want to talk to other patients about their experience of going on holiday when on dialysis.

If your holiday is longer than 4 weeks, you will need to be transferred to another dialysis unit. This can take time to organise, so please allow plenty of time for this to be arranged before you book your holiday.

There may be times when we're unable to support your holiday. This may be because there is not enough time to organise your dialysis or because you are not fit to travel.

We will usually try to agree to your travel if it is essential for work or study purposes.

Things to do before you travel

- Make sure you arrange travel insurance. It is sometimes difficult to organise insurance when you are on dialysis, so it is a good idea to shop around.
- Check if you need any vaccinations.
- If you are on the transplant waiting list, you will need to let your transplant coordinator know your travel dates and where you are going. They may need to suspend you from the transplant list whilst you are away.
- If you need any fit notes to travel, speak to your local Renal Unit Manager.
- Make sure you have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This allows you to access state-provided healthcare in all European Economic Area (EEA) countries. The EHIC is available free of charge by calling 0300 330 1350 or from the following website: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx
- If you have any questions, speak to your Renal Unit Manager.

We can usually supply epo (Eprex or Aranesp) if you need it. It will need to be kept cold during the journey and whilst you are away. Speak to your dialysis nurse, who will advise you if you need epo and how to keep it cold.

How do I organise time away if I am on Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)?

Your PD fluid can be delivered within the UK or abroad if you give the correct notice (lead time). Depending where in the world you wish to go, you will need to give at least 6 to 8 weeks' notice. Please check with your PD nurse that the delivery company are able to deliver fluid to your travel destination before you book it.

If you are travelling abroad to certain countries, you may have to pay for the cost of collecting the fluid from the airport or sea port. The cost will depend on the country you are visiting and the amount of PD supplies you need.

PD travel bags are available to loan for a specific period. They should be returned in a clean condition.

What supplies can be delivered to my travel destination?

Your PD fluid is ordered through Baxter Travel or Fresenius Travel Club by your PD nurse.

They are only able to deliver PD fluid. You will need to pack everything else, including other equipment such as dialysis lines, caps, dressings and cleaning solutions.

Two weeks before you go you will receive a letter explaining what is being delivered. It is important that you check this, so you know you have the correct supplies for your time away. Your PD nurse can give you a checklist to help you plan your travel; please ask them for a copy.

Will I need to take my dialysis machine?

If you dialyse using a:

- **Fresenius machine** – this will be delivered to your travel destination. You will need to make sure there is someone available who can take delivery of the machine and is able to be there when it is collected to be returned.
- **Baxter machine** – you will need to take your machine with you. Baxter will provide you with travel labels.

How do I organise time away if I am on haemodialysis (HD)?

Ask your HD nurse for suggestions about which units near to where you will be staying can provide haemodialysis. You will need to phone the unit in advance, to arrange a dialysis slot.

When you have booked a dialysis slot, talk to your HD nurse, as you will need to have some blood tests and possibly other tests before you travel. We will need a minimum of 4 weeks' notice to prepare you for your holiday.

Will I need to pay for dialysis?

If the HD unit near to where you are staying is a private unit, you will need to check that they have a holiday agreement with the NHS. This means the NHS will pay for your dialysis. Holiday dialysis can also be arranged abroad using the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in most European countries.

If the private HD unit does not have an agreement with the NHS, or is outside of the EHIC areas, you will need to pay for your dialysis treatment. Your dialysis unit is unable to pay for this, if it is not funded by the NHS.

There are some HD units in countries outside of the European Union where the NHS will fund your dialysis. Your HD nurse will let you know whether this applies to the country you are visiting.

Are there any risks in travelling abroad?

Blood borne infections, such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C, are more common in other parts of the world than they are in the UK. People on haemodialysis are more vulnerable to these infections. Please ask for our leaflet 'Risks of exposure to blood borne viruses at home and on holiday'.

What happens when I return from my travels, if I'm on haemodialysis?

If you have HD in a country where blood borne infections are common (such as the Indian subcontinent and parts of Africa), you will need to dialyse in isolation for at least 3 months following your return. This is to protect other patients from the risk of infection. You may also be suspended from the transplant list for 3 months and only reactivated if your blood tests are negative after this time.

When you return, your usual haemodialysis slot cannot be guaranteed. If you need to dialyse in isolation, you may need to change your appointment times and location. However, we will try to continue your dialysis at your usual dialysis unit.

Is there anything else I need to think about?

It is important you plan you travel around your dialysis days; you should not miss your dialysis treatment in order to travel. If you are travelling on a particular day which is usually your dialysis day, speak to your dialysis nurse. They may be able to offer you a different dialysis day.

If you are flying, it is best to have your dialysis treatment as close to your flight as possible. This will reduce the risk of you missing a treatment if your flight is delayed.

You may need to organise your own transport to your travel dialysis unit.

We are not able to give you any further supplies for your holiday; this includes tinzaparin and dialysers. The travel dialysis unit will provide these (you may have to pay for them, depending on the country you are visiting).

Can I go on a cruise?

You will need to get approval from your dialysis unit before you go on a cruise.

If the majority of the cruise ports are within the boundaries of a European Economic Area country or a country with which the UK has a reciprocal agreement, then you can be reimbursed up to the cost of the tariff (the cost towards your treatment, set by NHS England). You will need receipts and proof of payment when you return, to be able to reclaim the cost. For cruises outside of these countries, you will have to pay for the total cost of dialysis yourself.

You must have adequate travel insurance to cover you whilst on a cruise, as NHS England will only pay up to the cost of the renal dialysis tariff and will not pay for any other healthcare costs.

Check with your dialysis unit before you travel, as the reimbursement may not cover the total cost of the dialysis.

Where can I get further information?

KC Dialysis Club: Dialysis centre in Bournemouth

Tel: **01202 422 311**

Website: www.kcdialysis.com

Kidney Research UK

Website: www.kidneyresearchuk.org/news/taking-a-holiday-on-dialysis--advice-for-kidney-patients

Freedom (Dialysis Specialist Company)

Tel: **01509 815 999**

Website: www.holidaydialysis.co.uk

Global Dialysis

Website: www.globaldialysis.com

NHS England: Dialysis away from base

This will give you more detailed information about the NHS funding of holiday dialysis.

Website: www.engage.england.nhs.uk/consultation/specialised-services-policies/user_uploads/dafb-commissioning-policy-27814.pdf

Frequently asked questions:

Website: www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2013/05/dafb-faqs.pdf

Further information

Oxford Kidney Unit

The Oxford Kidney Unit website has information about the Unit, which you and your relatives and friends might find useful.

Website: www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku/

100,000 Genomes Project

World class research is carried out at Oxford University Hospitals. We are also a Genomics Medicine Centre and you may be eligible to take part in the 100,000 Genomes project. During your visit you may be approached about clinical research studies and the Genomes project. If you would like further information, please ask your healthcare professional or visit the website:

www.ouh.nhs.uk/research/projects/genomes.aspx

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter,
a document in Easy Read, another language, large print,
Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473**
or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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