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Guidance

# Healthcare for UK nationals visiting the EU

How to get state healthcare when you're on holiday or travelling to a country in the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland.

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From:  
Department of Health and Social Care (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>)

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### Coronavirus (COVID-19) travel advice

See the latest health advice for UK travellers following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>).

This information is about visiting the EU. There's different guidance for healthcare if you're going to live, study or work in an EU country (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/healthcare-in-the-eu-norway-iceland-liechtenstein-and-switzerland>).

At the moment, when you travel to an EU country you should have both:

- a European Health Insurance Card ([EHIC](#))
- travel insurance with healthcare cover

Each healthcare system is different, and in some countries you'll need to pay to have treatment.

## Healthcare during the transition period

There will be no changes to healthcare access for UK nationals visiting or living in the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland before the end of 2020.

You can continue to use your [EHIC](#) during this time, as you did before.

If you're visiting an EU country on 31 December 2020, you can continue to use your [EHIC](#) until the end of your visit to that country.

An [EHIC](#) is not a replacement for travel insurance. Make sure you have both before you travel.

## European Health Insurance Cards ([EHIC](#))

An [EHIC](#) covers state healthcare, not private treatment.

With an [EHIC](#) you can get emergency or necessary medical care for the same cost as a resident in the country you're visiting. This means that you can get healthcare at a reduced cost or for free.

Find out what an [EHIC](#) covers in each country (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1021&langId=en>). You can select the country you are planning to visit from the drop-down list.

An [EHIC](#) is not a replacement for travel insurance – it does not cover everything, such as mountain rescue or being flown back to the UK. Make sure you have both before you travel.

You'll need to pay in full for treatment if you do not have an [EHIC](#).

The following European countries do not accept the [EHIC](#):

- the Channel Islands, including Guernsey, Alderney and Sark
- the Isle of Man
- Monaco
- San Marino
- the Vatican

## How to apply

Apply for an [EHIC](#) for free on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-ehic-european-health-insurance-card/>).

## Replacing a lost or stolen [EHIC](#)

If you're still in the UK, you can apply for a new [EHIC](#) for free on the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-ehic-european-health-insurance-card/>).

You'll need to apply for a Provisional Replacement Certificate (PRC) if your [EHIC](#) is lost or stolen abroad (<https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/travel-health/what-do-i-do-if-i-lose-my-ehic-or-it-gets-stolen/>).

## Travelling with a health condition

Buy travel insurance (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance>) with healthcare cover for your condition. You can use an [EHIC](#) for emergency treatment.

Read the Money and Pensions Advice Service guidance for buying travel insurance for people with pre-existing medical conditions (<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/travel-insurance-for-over-65s-and-medical-conditions>).

If you need to have treatment while you're abroad, you may need to pre-arrange it. For example, if you need dialysis or oxygen treatment. Speak to your doctor in the UK for advice before you travel.

## Getting prescriptions

You can use a UK prescription in pharmacies in EU countries.

## Bringing medicine with you

You need a letter to prove your medicine is prescribed to you if it contains a 'controlled drug'. You may need to show this at the border when you're entering or leaving the UK.

You may also need a licence for controlled drugs if:

- your trip is longer than 3 months
- you are travelling with more than 3 months' supply

Read more about travelling with controlled medicines (<http://www.gov.uk/travelling-controlled-drugs>).

## Travelling to have planned treatment

You cannot use an [EHIC](#) for planned treatment. For example, if you're going abroad to give birth.

You can apply for NHS funding for planned treatment. There are 2 ways to do this:

- the S2 route
- the EU directive route

Read the NHS guide to going abroad for medical treatment for more information on these funding routes (<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/going-abroad-for-treatment/going-abroad-for-medical-treatment/>).

## [EHIC](#) from 1 January 2021

You'll still be able to access healthcare through [EHIC](#) for visits that begin after 1 January 2021 if you're either:

- a UK State Pensioner living in the EU before the end of 2020
- a UK student studying in in the EU before the end of 2020
- a 'frontier worker' (someone who works in one state and lives in another) before the end of 2020, for as long as you continue to be a frontier worker in the host state
- an EU national living in the UK before the end of 2020

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1. 13 March 2020

Link to the latest coronavirus (COVID-19) travel advice added.

2. 23 September 2019

Added new section on how to get help paying for treatment after Brexit, and update on student EHICs.

3. 13 September 2019

Added link to Foreign Office travel insurance guidance in the travel insurance section.

4. 28 August 2019

Increased visibility of calls to actions. Highlighted the guidance on what to do to prepare for Brexit, agreements with EFTA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) and studying in the EU.

5. 19 March 2019

Updated guidance on buying travel insurance.

6. 28 January 2019

First published.

## Transition period

Find out what it means for you (<https://www.gov.uk/transition>)

## Related content

- Healthcare for UK nationals living in France (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-france-including-martinique-and-guadaloupe>)
- Healthcare for UK nationals in Spain (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-spain-including-the-balearic-and-canary-islands>)
- Using the NHS when you return to live in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-nhs-when-you-return-to-live-in-the-uk>)
- Healthcare for UK nationals living in Poland (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-poland>)
- Healthcare for EU citizens living in the UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-eu-and-efta-nationals-living-in-the-uk>)

## Detailed guidance

- Healthcare for UK nationals living in Austria (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-in-austria>)

## Collection

- Healthcare in the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/healthcare-in-the-eu-norway-iceland-liechtenstein-and-switzerland>)

## Explore the topic

- Europe (<https://www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/europe>)