United Kingdom

Risk Ratings

I LOW MEDICAL RISK for United Kingdom

Risk Summary

The most common risks to travellers result from opportunistic street crime such as pickpocketing, bag-snatching and mugging. Levels of violent crime are higher in major cities, though such activities tend to be concentrated in lower-income areas that short-term visitors are unlikely to frequent.

Protests are normally well policed and remain peaceful; on rare occasions though when they are staged by radical activists they can become confrontational. Urban riots have also occurred. Occasional outbreaks of sectarian violence pose an indirect risk to business travellers in some areas of Northern Ireland.

The UK is exposed to the threat of Islamist militant attacks, though its extensive and effective intelligence and security apparatus largely mitigates associated risks. In July 2005, several suicide bombings hit the capital London's public transport system. In 2017, the country experienced several further high-profile attacks: a car-ramming attack in the Westminster area of London in March; a suicide bombing at a concert venue in Manchester in May, and a vehicle-ramming and stabbing attack in the London Bridge area in June.

This information is intended as a summary of the travel security environment; however, the risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation. Please refer to our alerts to ensure you are informed of the most recent developments.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

Alerts

1 London: Plan routes avoiding protests at Lambeth, Vauxhall bridges, Elephant and Castle; anticipate further disruption

2 Measles in 2018

3 Expect disruption to Northern Rail, South Western Railway services during strikes in coming weeks

View All Alerts

Vaccinations For United Kingdom

Hepatitis A Many travel health professionals recommend
Read more

Hepatitis B Recommended for health care workers and anyone
Read more

Routine Vaccinations

- All routine vaccinations should be current: these include Measles-Mumps-Rubella, Polio, Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis, and Varicella.
- Annual influenza vaccination.

Other Medical Precautions

- Before you go - See your doctor and dentist and ensure you are in the best health before you leave. Other preparations:
  - Malaria
  - Zika Virus
  - Health Threats

Before You Go

See your doctor and dentist and ensure you are in the best health before you leave. Other preparations:

- Check your routine vaccinations
  Check your routine vaccinations are up to date (polio; varicella; measles, mumps and rubella; tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, seasonal influenza). See a travel health practitioner 6 to 8 weeks before departure for destination-specific health preparations. You may need additional vaccinations, some of which require several doses, or be recommended malaria medication which may need to be started a week or more before arriving in the malarial country.

- Documentation: Arrange a copy of your personal health record to carry with you when you travel. Include a letter from your doctor explaining your need for all medications you are carrying, including any over-the-counter medications, in English and the language of your destination(s). Make sure you have copies of your prescriptions.

- Medication: Check the regulations of your destination country regarding importation of your medication, as some drugs may be strictly prohibited (especially narcotics and psychotropics) and may result in severe penalties. Take any medicines you require in their original packaging, including any information leaflets, with them clearly labelled with your name (matching your passport name), and your doctor's name. Have enough to cover the trip, and extra in case of delays, however note that many destinations limit quantities of certain drugs to a 30-day supply. Carry medication in your hand luggage, with copies of your prescriptions.
Vaccinations for United Kingdom

Recommendations may vary for short-term visitors. Always consult your travel health advisor or contact International SOS to discuss your specific needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Recommended Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td>Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all travellers regardless of destination, especially those who are at higher risk, such as men who have sex with men, people who use illicit drugs or those with liver disease.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>Recommended for healthcare workers and anyone who may have a new sexual partner, share needles or get a tattoo or body piercing. Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travellers and expatriates, regardless of destination.</td>
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Malaria

There is no malaria in United Kingdom.

Zika Virus

There is no Zika Virus in United Kingdom.

Standard of Care

Emergency Response

Always try to call International SOS whenever medical care or advice is required, especially in emergencies.

SINGLE EU EMERGENCY NUMBER Use 112 to contact all emergency services in all EU countries. You can also call 999 in the UK.

The UK public ambulance is very efficient. Ambulances are fully equipped to handle serious conditions. In addition to road ambulances, regional helicopter air ambulances are in operation throughout the UK. Motorbike paramedics are often used in areas of high traffic congestion as first responders.

The private ambulance companies are used for non-emergency transport and can usually provide doctor, nurse or paramedic escorts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police</td>
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Standard of Health Care

The quality of medical care in the United Kingdom is of an international standard, and all surgical specialties are available. Public NHS hospitals offer tertiary-level care and should be used for all emergency cases. Private hospitals have no accident and emergency departments and will not accept emergency cases or walk-in outpatient visits. Both public and private hospitals provide a high level of care for non-emergency cases.

Although medical facilities are more limited in rural areas, there is a well-developed internal medical evacuation service. The British National Health Care System (NHS) uses a "general practice" model. Individuals must seek their initial care from a general practitioner (GP) before seeing a specialist.

Some helpful medical terminology used in the United Kingdom:

- 'Pharmacies' are referred to as 'Chemists'.
- 'Emergency Rooms' are called 'Casualty Departments' or 'Accident and Emergency (A&E)'.
- 'Physicians' refer to 'Internal Medicine Specialists'.
- 'Office Hours' are often called 'Surgery' or 'Clinic Hours'.

Private maternity services are in short supply in areas outside central London. It is highly likely that delivery will be undertaken in the public hospitals. Within Central London, there are a number of private hospitals able to receive expectant mothers for delivery.

Out-Patient Care

The National Health Service (NHS) controls most medical care in the UK. Initial medical care is handled by a general practitioner (GP) who is trained to handle a wide range of medical problems, including routine paediatrics and gynaecology.

UK Residents need to register with an NHS GP in their area and use this doctor for all non-urgent medical care, which is administered free of charge. If the condition requires specialist care, the GP will make a referral. It is not possible to make initial appointments directly with specialists, you will be instructed to see a GP first. The NHS website in England and the NHS24 website in Scotland can be used to find a GP.

Visitors to the UK (and residents travelling outside their home area) cannot "walk-in" to any GP except in an emergency, when they will be seen as a temporary resident and only at the discretion of the GP. Alternatives for accessing non-urgent medical care include:

- Calling International SOS for a referral to a reliable care provider and help making an appointment.
- Having International SOS schedule a house or hotel doctor visit (this is easier to arrange in London but is usually possible in other larger cities). You will be charged a "fee-for-service".
- Visit the NHS website in England or the NHS24 website in Scotland to locate:
  - GPs in the area who will see visitors needing acute care. Often easier to arrange outside major metropolitan areas.
  - the nearest NHS Primary Care Centre. These are nurse-run centres where medical staff can see patients to treat minor illnesses and injuries. They will refer to the local emergency care site if necessary.
  - Emergency care site (A&E, or ER) of a hospital if required.

Paying for Health Care

Most providers will expect payment at the time services are rendered. Private hospitals and physicians usually accept major credit cards and cash.

Do not defer medical treatment because of financial concerns. Contact International SOS, and if our terms allow, we will make financial arrangements on your behalf.

Dental Care

The United Kingdom offers a full spectrum of clinics that provide high quality dental care.

Dental provision in the UK National Health Service is oversubscribed, but private facilities are available to supplement access to quality dental care. Access to emergency dental care out of hours can be limited, even in larger cities.

Blood Supplies

The blood supply in the UK is screened according to international standards and is considered safe.

Even in areas where the blood supply is considered safe, it’s best to avoid blood transfusions if possible. Screening cannot detect every blood-borne disease, and immune reactions can vary from minor to life-threatening. If a blood transfusion is recommended and circumstances permit, seek a second opinion from International SOS or your health advisor.

Medication Availability

Major pharmacies are well stocked with most international brands of medication. Many medications require a prescription from a local physician. Prescriptions are customarily filled with equivalent generic drugs; it is likely you will not receive the brand-name medication. Pharmacies only accept prescriptions issued in the UK. Less commonly stocked medication may be subject to a delay in dispensing, especially if more than a month’s supply is required.

General medication, such as cold and flu remedies, can be bought over the counter in retail pharmacies. Pharmacies rotate 24-hour schedules. Lists of open pharmacies are usually posted outside of each pharmacy. Pharmacy locations and opening times in England can also be found on the NHS website and in Scotland on the NHS24 website.

For customs purposes, bring medications in their original packaging accompanied by a medical report detailing why you need to take them, especially if you are taking any “controlled” medications. A licence is required for these controlled substances if staying in the UK for three months or longer.

Since brand names vary, know the generic (chemical) names of your medications. It is always advisable to bring an adequate supply of prescription and other medications from your home country. Check the expiration date on all medications.

Clinics & Hospitals

Medical Providers

No matter where you are, contact International SOS first if you are sick, injured or need medical advice.

Our medical staff will advise you, help you select the correct doctor, hospital or clinic, and make any necessary appointments on your behalf. If our terms allow, we will also make financial arrangements for you.

It is recommended that you contact International SOS before accessing medical care in United Kingdom

Hospitals / Clinics

If you are unable to contact International SOS, the following list of hospitals and clinics is provided in case of medical emergencies.

Edinburgh

Spire Murrayfield Hospital Edinburgh
Category: Hospital
Address: 122 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh, Midlothian EH12 6UD
Telephone: 01313162501

London

Princess Grace Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 42 52 Nottingham Place
London, Greater London W1U 5NY
Telephone: 020 7486 1234

The Portland Hospital for Women and Children
Category: Hospital
Address: 205 209 Great Portland St
London, Greater London W1W 5AH
Telephone: 020 3411 2786
020 3642 2362
Wellington Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 8a Wellington Place
St Johns Wood
London, London NW8 9LE
Telephone: 44 (0)207 586 5959

Manchester
Spire Manchester Hospital
Category: Hospital
Address: 170 Barlow Moor Road
Didsbury
Manchester, Manchester M20 2AF
Telephone: 44 (0)1614476677

Food & Water

Food and Water Precautions
Travellers have a small risk of developing diarrhea in any country. It may be advisable to drink bottled water only, especially on short trips. Always wash your hands with soap before eating, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. See the following country-specific recommendations:

Water and Beverages
Tap water is considered safe.

Food Risk
Food is considered safe.
[More on food and water safety]

Health Threats

Rabies | Threat from : Animals
Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination
Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:
- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need post-exposure vaccination, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

United Kingdom

"European Lyssavirus", a virus closely related to rabies, has been found in a very small number of UK bats. The risk of exposure for average travellers is very low. Nevertheless, any bat may be carrying the disease. Any bat scratch or bite should be viewed as a possible exposure to the virus and post-exposure rabies treatment and vaccination is given.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, & STIs | Threat from : Sex/blood/needles
HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).
- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:
- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes sterile and not shared between patients.
• Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
• Be aware of your risk when assisting an injured person. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
• Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Lyme disease | Threat from: Bites and Stings

Lyme disease occurs in North America, Europe and Asia. It is transmitted to humans by the bite of a particular species of tick. Lyme disease can cause an expanding rash at the site of the bite, fever, arthritis and nerve problems such as facial palsy.

To prevent tick bites:
- Avoid tick habitats
- Use insect repellents
- Check daily for ticks

Lyme disease vaccination is no longer available.

If you develop a rash at the site of a tick bite or other symptoms of Lyme disease, seek medical attention. A course of antibiotics can cure Lyme disease.

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, Lyme disease is the most common infection that is spread to people through biting insects. Most cases occur in late spring and early summer, the main tick feeding season. Cases have been reported from most counties in England and Wales, however infection is most common in Exmoor, the New Forest, the South Downs, parts of Wiltshire and Berkshire, Thetford Forest, the Lake District and the North York Moors. The Scottish Highlands are also known to have a high population of ticks.

Disclaimer: Privacy

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