

# Health care

## in Scotland for holidaymakers from overseas

- › In Scotland, most health care is provided by the National Health Service (NHS).
- › **If you are coming to Scotland on holiday or to visit friends or relatives, you may have to pay for any health care you need while you are here and should get travel insurance with medical cover before your trip.**
- › This factsheet tells you about the health care you may be able to get free from the NHS if you become ill or have an accident.
- › This factsheet has been updated since the UK left the European Union.

### Can I get free NHS care while I am on holiday in Scotland?

- Yes, some health care services are free for everyone. These include:
  - emergency care in a hospital (in the accident and emergency department, casualty department, or minor injury unit)
  - emergency care at a GP Practice (in Scotland, family doctors are called General Practitioners or GPs)
  - emergency transport in an ambulance
  - sexual health services (family planning)
  - treatment for some infectious diseases and sexually transmitted infections. This includes the diagnosis and treatment of Covid.
- If you need other health care, NHS staff will ask you to show them some documents to help them decide if you can be treated as an NHS patient.

### I live in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. Can I get free NHS care when I visit Scotland?

- Yes. If you normally live in the EEA or Switzerland, you will not have to pay for **treatment that is necessary** while you are here.
  - This includes treatment for an illness or condition you had before coming to Scotland (including dialysis), as well as treatment you need if you become ill or have an accident while you are here.
- You must get a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in your own country before your trip.
- Treatment for long term conditions, such as dialysis and oxygen therapy, must be arranged before you travel to Scotland.
- You may need to show your EHIC card to NHS staff.
- If you do not have an EHIC card, or cannot obtain a Provisional Replacement Certificate, NHS staff may not be able to treat you as an NHS patient. You may need to pay for any care you receive.

## EEA countries

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden

### I do not live in the EEA or Switzerland. Can I get NHS care when I visit Scotland?

- You may be able to. The UK has special arrangements with some countries and territories outside the EEA.
- If you come from one of those countries you may be able to get some free health care from the NHS while you are here.
- You should ask the health service in your own country about this.

### You may get some free NHS care if you live in one of the following countries or territories:

- Anguilla
- Australia
- Barbados
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- British Virgin Isles
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Guernsey
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Jersey
- Kosovo
- North Macedonia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- New Zealand
- Serbia
- St Helena
- Turks & Caicos Islands.

### What happens if I need treatment?

- NHS staff will need to see some documents to make sure you can get NHS care.
- NHS staff may need to see documents that show where you live, for example your driving license or other documents to prove you are registered for work or health care in your own country.
- If you do not have the documents they ask for, NHS staff will not be able to treat you as an NHS patient. You may need to pay for any care you receive.

**If you do not normally live in a country listed in this document, you will need to pay for all of your health care (other than the health care services that are free to everyone).**

### Is all health care free for NHS patients?

- No. If you are treated as an NHS patient, most of your health care is free. But, like UK citizens who normally live in Scotland, you will need to pay for some things. For example, certain dental treatment and eye care.

## Will I need to pay if I need transport with medical support to get home?

- Yes. If you become ill or have an accident and need transport with medical support to go back to your home country, you will have to pay for this.
- The costs of transport with medical support are not covered by the EHIC, or by any special health arrangements that Scotland has with some countries and territories outside the EEA. Neither the Scottish Government nor NHS Scotland will pay for a journey home with medical cover.
- **You should get travel insurance, with medical cover that fully meets your needs before you travel to Scotland.**

## What can I do if I run out of my medicines while I am in Scotland?

### Visit a local GP

- You can contact a GP in the area where you are staying and ask to make an appointment.
- To find a local GP, phone the NHS Inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or visit the NHS Inform website:  
[www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/gp-practices](http://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory/gp-practices)
- Information on how to register with a GP Practice is available on the NHS Inform website at:  
[www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice](http://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice)

- The GP will ask you about your medicines and give you an NHS prescription. This is a document that you can take to any pharmacy. The pharmacist will give you the medicines listed on the prescription.
- Some medicines will not be prescribed by the NHS but can be prescribed by a GP on a private basis. If you agree to this, you will need to pay to see the GP and for the full price of each medicine on the prescription.

### Go to a pharmacy

- You can go to a pharmacy in the area where you are staying and ask the pharmacist for a small supply of the medicines you need.
  - If the pharmacist agrees to do this, you will need to pay the full price for the medicines.
- To find a local pharmacy, phone the NHS Inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or visit the NHS Inform website:  
[www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/pharmacy/nhs-pharmacy-first-scotland](http://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/pharmacy/nhs-pharmacy-first-scotland).
- Your medicines may not be available in the UK.

## How can I find out more?

- **Visit the NHS 24 website** at [www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot) for health information and advice.
- **For information about health conditions and services, phone the NHS Inform Helpline on: 0800 22 44 88**  
**Textphone: 18001 0800 22 44 88**  
**BSL users : [contactscotland-bsl.org](http://contactscotland-bsl.org)**
- The helpline is open every day between 8am and 6pm. You can only call the helpline from the UK.

## Other factsheets in this series

- Health care for people coming to Scotland to work
- Health care for people coming to Scotland to study
- Health care for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland
- Health care in Scotland for UK passport holders living abroad
- Health care in Scotland for former UK residents now working abroad
- Health care for UK pensioners visiting Scotland.

## You can get these factsheets from:

- [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)
- the NHS Inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88.

## Feeling unwell?

- **Go to a pharmacy** and ask for advice. To find your nearest pharmacy, phone the NHS Inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88 or look online: [www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/pharmacy/nhs-pharmacy-first-scotland](http://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/pharmacy/nhs-pharmacy-first-scotland).
- **Visit the NHS 24 website** at [www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot) for health information and advice.
- **Phone NHS 24 on 111** (NHS 24 can provide an interpreting service).

**In an emergency (if your condition is very serious), phone 999 and ask for an ambulance.**

We have tried our best to make sure that this information is correct. However, the information is for guidance only so you should not rely on it as a full statement of the law. If you are thinking about taking legal action, you should contact a solicitor, a citizens advice bureau, or other advice agency.

Check [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot) for versions of this information in other languages or formats.

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