

Travel

Travelling can have many benefits for people affected by cancer. It may help you relax, or allow you to spend more time with family and friends. [Travel](#) may also help you become more active. This can have health benefits before, during and after cancer treatment.

Many people who have cancer can travel without problems. For others, cancer or its treatment may make travelling more difficult. Here are some things you may need to think about:

- Cancer and treatment can cause symptoms or side effects. These may cause problems while travelling.
- You may need to take medicines and medical equipment with you.
- Travel insurance is generally more expensive for people who have cancer.
- You may need a fit to fly certificate from your doctor.

Tips for travelling if you have cancer

- Speak to your doctor, specialist nurse or a health professional before you make any plans. They can advise whether it is safe for you to travel and explain how to [prepare](#).
- Ask your GP or cancer doctor for a letter giving a short explanation of your diagnosis and treatment. You can take the letter with you and show it to healthcare providers abroad if you become ill.
- If you are still having cancer treatment, your healthcare team may be able to help you plan a safer trip. It may be possible to change your treatment dates or arrange a break in your treatment.
- Ask a healthcare professional about having [vaccinations](#) at least 8 weeks before you travel. Vaccinations can protect you from certain infections found around the world. But some vaccinations may not be suitable for you. This may mean you cannot travel safely to some parts of the world.
- Try to find suitable travel insurance. This may protect you from losing money if you need to cancel your trip or need emergency medical treatment abroad. Some travel insurance providers may ask for a doctor's letter confirming you are fit to travel.
- Apply for a free [Global Health Insurance Card \(GHIC\)](#). You can use this to get free, or less expensive, emergency healthcare in some European Union countries. A GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance and it is important to buy this wherever you travel.
- Tell your travel company and accommodation in advance about any needs you have.
- Get advice from your healthcare team about [taking medicines or medical equipment abroad](#). If you are taking medicines abroad, check with the country's embassy or high commission if there are any restrictions. You may need to get a doctor's letter or apply for a personal medicines licence from the Home Office.
- Take enough medicine to last your whole trip and in case your return is delayed.
- Cover up in the sun. Use sun cream with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30, and a 4 or 5-star UVA protection rating.
- It is important to reduce your risk of infection. Wash your hands regularly and be careful about what you eat and drink. Try to avoid insect bites, especially from mosquitoes.
- If you become ill while staying in a hotel, ask the receptionist to call a doctor. If you need urgent help, contact the emergency services or go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on be.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [Travel and cancer](#).

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Further Macmillan support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Or visit macmillan.org.uk where you can [chat to us online](#).

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

Other useful contact details

- The British Insurance Brokers' Association can help you find travel insurance brokers – visit www.biba.org.uk or call 0370 950 1790 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm).
- Fit for Travel gives information on avoiding illness and staying healthy when travelling – visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is the government department which supports British citizens abroad – visit www.fco.gov.uk or call 0207 008 1500.
- The National Travel Health Network and Centre provides free travel health information for travellers and health professionals – visit www.travelhealthpro.org.uk

Notes and questions
