

03 Mar 2023

Before you travel: important reminder about routine United Kingdom (UK) vaccines

Before you travel check all your routine immunisations are up to date

Before travelling abroad, check you and your family are in date for all [routine UK recommended vaccine courses and boosters](#).

When healthcare systems are disrupted and vaccine coverage declines, diseases like diphtheria, measles and polio often return. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a significant decline in childhood vaccination worldwide, related to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruption straining health systems [1].

Many diseases prevented by routine vaccination are no longer common in the UK but are still reported in other countries [2-4]. During international travel, routine UK recommended vaccines protect you and your family from infectious diseases like diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella and polio. Further information about these and other diseases is available in [Topics in brief](#).

Diphtheria, mumps, rubella, polio and tetanus are now rare in the UK, thanks to the success of the routine UK vaccination programme [5]. These diseases are still reported in regions where vaccines are in short supply or unavailable and international travellers who are not up to date with their vaccinations can become infected [2-5].

Measles continues to be reported in the UK, as some people missed routine MMR vaccines [3].

Summaries of the numbers of vaccine preventable diseases reported worldwide are available here:

- [WHO Global Health Observatory data repository: Vaccine-preventable communicable diseases](#)

Diphtheria, measles and tetanus outbreaks are not usually reported on the [TravelHealthPro Outbreak Surveillance](#) section as UK travellers should have had [UK routine immunisations](#) before travelling abroad.

Advice for travellers

Check you and your family are in date for all [routine UK recommended vaccine courses and boosters](#) before you travel. If you are not sure, check with your GP practice or a travel clinic. In the UK [diphtheria-tetanus-polio vaccine](#) and [MMR](#) vaccines are available free of charge as part of the UK routine vaccination schedule.

See our [general advice for travellers](#) for more information about preparing to travel abroad.

Advice for health professionals

Guidance on routine UK vaccines, including information about booster doses, is available in [Immuneisation against infectious disease](#).

This includes advice for those people whose [immunisation status is uncertain](#).

In the UK all [notifiable diseases](#) must be reported to your [local Health Protection Team](#).

Resources

- [UK Health Security Agency: Diphtheria: guidance, data and analysis](#)
- [UK Health Security Agency: MMR for all: general guide](#)

References

1. [World Health Organization. Immunisation coverage. 14 July 2022. \[Accessed 2 March 2022\]](#)
2. [UK Health Security Agency. Diphtheria: the green book, chapter 15. Immunisation against Infectious Disease. Last updated 19 April 2013. \[Accessed 2 March 2023\]](#)
3. [UK Health Security Agency. Measles: the green book, chapter 21. Last updated 31 December 2019. \[Accessed 2 March 2023\]](#)
4. [UK Health Security Agency. Polio: the green book, chapter 26. Last updated 19 April 2013. \[Accessed 2 March 2023\]](#)
5. [UK Health Security Agency. UK immunisation schedule: the green book, chapter 11. Last updated 17 March 2022. \[Accessed 2 March 2023\]](#)