

Pre-Existing Health Problems and Travel – especially overseas travel.

(Occupational Health Physician Advisory note for UCC Staff.)

If you have a health condition that needs regular or intermittent treatment you should take a sufficient supply of your medicines to last for the length of your trip, including foreseeable delays. Be aware that, in some resource-poor countries, locally-purchased medicines may be counterfeit.

If any of the following apply, you should seek advice from the University Occupational Physician on whether any additional precautions are advised to prevent problems whilst you are away:

- The amount of medicines you will need is more than that usually prescribed on a single prescription
- Your health problem requires regular medical assessment or monitoring (e.g. diabetes, anti-coagulant treatment, chemotherapy)
- Your problem can cause sudden incapacity e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, bleeding disorders, severe asthma
- You have impaired immunity e.g. HIV disease; treatment with high-dose steroids; treatment with immunosuppressant drugs
- The health problem has been severe enough for you to have needed admission to hospital within the past year
- The medicines used in your treatment is novel
- Your health problem limits your ability to undertake physical exertion (e.g. heart disease, severe lung disease)

If your illness is considered rare or your treatment unusual, you should carry a letter from your doctor detailing the health problem and usual management of this. If you have a health problem that could cause sudden incapacity e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, bleeding disorders, brittle asthma then you should let at least one other person (usually the group leader or a first aider) know, so they can help you and make sure you get the right help, if needed.

Recent major illness: Anyone intending to travel within three months of a major illness, e.g. heart attack, stroke, any operation or treatment requiring an overnight stay in hospital should seek medical advice on their fitness to travel and work abroad.

Travelling with medicines: If you are taking medication you should, if airline regulations allow, carry your medicines with you in your hand luggage, to ensure they arrive at the same destination as you. If you take need to medicine by injection or in liquid form on a plane journey, carry a letter from your doctor confirming this.

Controlled drugs: If you are treated with controlled drugs (opiate pain-killers, some tranquillisers) you must carry a physician's letter authorising their use to avoid difficulties when entering countries.

Pregnancy: Whilst pregnancy is not an illness, the appropriateness of travel and travel modes/ durations during pregnancy must also be considered in the case of female staff. The staff members GP should advise in advance.

Travel related VTE or travellers' thrombosis advice is available from:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/travelhealth/Pages/PreventingDVT.aspx>

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Dept Record:

I _____ (name) _____ (position)

Dept _____ have read and understood the above advice.