



# Travel health update

Unfortunately, not all travel is disaster-free, and knowing where to turn and what to do in the event of an emergency is an important part of travel advice – even at this time of year

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## CHRISTMAS HOME OR AWAY

Where will you be spending the festive season I wonder? I've never tried travelling abroad for the occasion and I have to say the transport strikes that are often planned at such a time causing major disruption put me off to a degree, but it would be interesting to give it a go one day. But whether you or your travellers are planning to have Christmas dinner on Bondi beach or mulled wine as part of an après-ski activity in Chamonix, travel health awareness still applies.

## STAYING SAFE WHEN ABROAD

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has discontinued its 'Know Before You Go' campaign and replaced it with Travelaware. Found at <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/>, this webpage takes the user to a host of excellent resources. Images on the website will lead to resources on travel advice for 225 countries where you can sign up for e mail alerts on the latest updates; foreign travel checklist itemising things to do before travelling abroad; travel insurance; passport information; mental wellbeing and travel abroad; adventure travel and volunteering abroad; how to stay healthy during a gap year overseas; #SkiSafe; FIFA world Cup Russia 2018 and driving abroad. A useful video presented by five-time Olympic skier Graham Bell gives advice for staying safe après-ski. For example, did you know the effects of alcohol can be double at altitude? There is also a video about insurance and a very interesting one demonstrating ways

people abroad may steal a passport from an unsuspecting traveller. The information given on each link is comprehensive with many additional useful resources.

Not incorporated in this particular campaign, but helpful to be aware of are leaflets from the FCO about death overseas. Clearly this is not an outcome wanted for any of our travellers but when it happens, albeit rarely, the reality has to be managed. A guidance page 'Coping with death abroad' with some very helpful leaflets can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-death-abroad>. Even more unimaginable is the topic of murder or manslaughter, and a leaflet called Consular support for those bereaved through murder or manslaughter abroad can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-british-people-abroad-murder-and-manslaughter>. Sadly in today's world we need to be vigilant at all times and Sky News posted a video back in the summer about what holiday makers should do in a terror attack situation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlfWgmZHIQ8>. Well forget the skiing activity, I think I need a glass of mulled wine after those last three links! I hope you or your travellers never need them, but they are useful to be aware of.

## MEDICATION ABROAD

A recent story of a British traveller who was imprisoned in Egypt and awaiting trial for taking tramadol, which is banned, into the country has caused a real stir in the press. Traveller awareness of the rules and regulations is essential because if found guilty, some countries will impose serious prison sentences or even the death penalty. What may be acceptable in the UK is not necessarily abroad and the factsheet from NaTHNaC published earlier this year on travelling with medicines, at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/travelling-with-medicines>, provides an

excellent overview of this subject. Take a look at this and the links in the resources section and make sure your travellers are aware of the advice.

Also of importance is the danger of fake or counterfeit medicines abroad, a good reason why we advise travellers to take sufficient medication with them if needed for ongoing health conditions, and to buy their malaria chemoprophylaxis in this country and not while they are away. A website 'Fight the fakes' provides some



very interesting insight into the many global problems on this subject. <http://fightthefakes.org/about/> The World Health Organization has been doing much work on this topic and a report was due to be published regarding global surveillance and monitoring, highlighting the causes, consequences and solutions. See <http://www.who.int/medicines/regulation/ssffc/en/>

Sorry, not the cheeriest Christmas update I've written, but I hope you've found it interesting nevertheless and the important message is to be well prepared. Travel health has been particularly challenging in 2017, but I wish you Season's Greetings and will hope for a plentiful supply of travel vaccines early in 2018! ♦