

**Wherever you travel. However you travel. Mind how you go : advice for travellers on avoiding the risks of HIV and AIDS / Travel Safe, U.K. Health Departments.**

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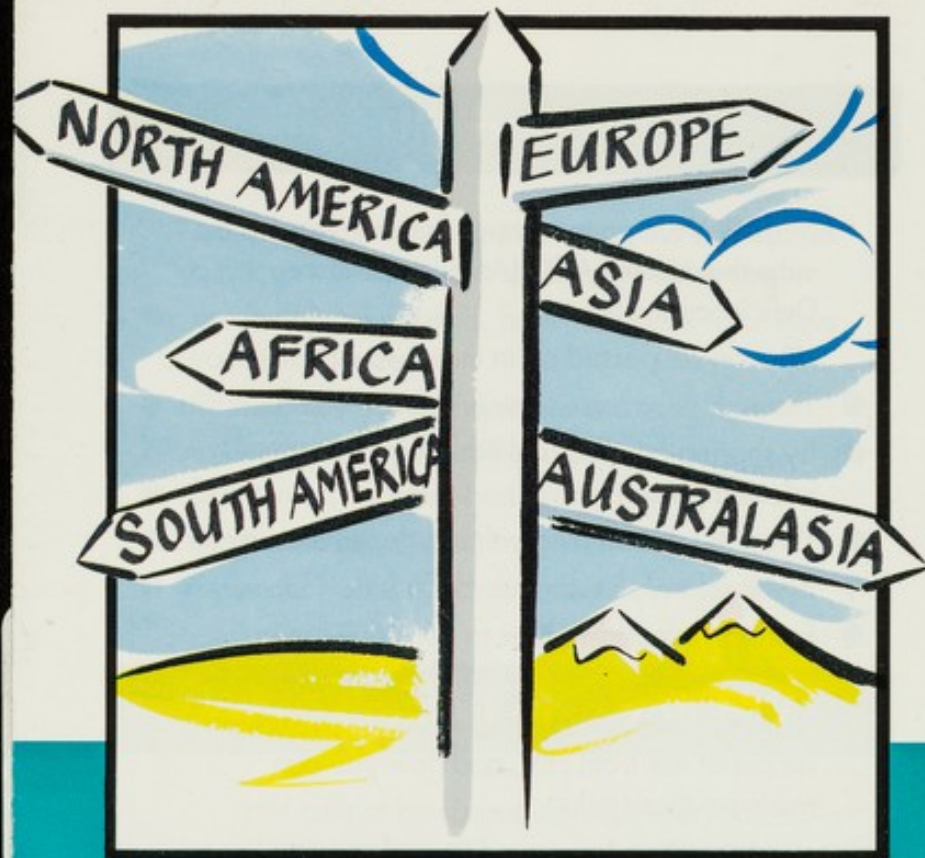
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**Wherever you travel.  
However you travel.  
Mind how you go.**

Advice for travellers on avoiding the  
risks of HIV and AIDS.

REVISED 1995 EDITION



**Travel Safe**

U.K. Health Departments

## HIV and AIDS

HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.)

HIV can be passed on in these ways:

- Through unprotected sex with an infected person.
- By sharing needles and other equipment with an infected person.
- Through infected medical and dental instruments.
- By blood transfusion with HIV infected blood.
- From an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, at birth or when breastfeeding.

This leaflet looks at ways your health might be put at risk from HIV, and how you can minimise those risks.

## The traveller and sex

HIV doesn't only affect homosexual men and drug users. Worldwide, the virus is most commonly transmitted through sex between men and women.



If you put yourself at risk and have sex with someone other than your usual partner **ALWAYS** use a condom.

Condoms are the most effective protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In some parts of the world many prostitutes are infected, so having sex with a prostitute is particularly risky.

- When you take condoms with you on holiday make sure they carry the British Standard Kitemark or the European Standard mark **CE**.
- If buying condoms abroad only buy good quality ones. Know how to use condoms properly.
- **ALWAYS** use a condom with a new partner, each time you have sex with them.



## Carry the card and follow the Code

### The **TravelSafe** Code

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is worldwide. When abroad you can reduce your risk if you follow the Travel Safe Code:

- **Avoid unnecessary medical or dental treatment and situations which may make this necessary.**
- **Avoid having casual relationships but if you have sex with someone new, always use a condom.**
- **Don't inject drugs or share needles and syringes.**
- **Remember alcohol and drugs affect your judgement.**
- **Avoid having a tattoo, acupuncture or your ears pierced unless sterile equipment is used.** **Travel Safe**



**Travel the world HIVSafe**

SEE THE REVERSE OF CARD FOR USEFUL TRAVEL INFORMATION TO CARRY WITH YOU.

## And travel the world HIV safe

### Medical care abroad

Because some countries do not have the same standards of medical and dental care that you are used to in the UK, needles and other equipment may not be adequately sterilised. Blood for transfusion is not always screened for the presence of HIV or Hepatitis B. So there may be an increased risk of you becoming infected with HIV, Hepatitis B or some other infection. It can be difficult to ensure the sterility of medical equipment if you are treated abroad. Medical and nursing staff may not be able to understand your concerns or may not speak English.

- Make sure that any medical equipment used is freshly sterilised or is taken from a sealed pack.
- Only have medical treatment if it is absolutely necessary. Doctors in some countries may give blood transfusions when they are not really needed, so make sure a transfusion is absolutely essential if one is offered.
- If you need a blood transfusion, ask for screened blood.
- Make sure your travelling companions have read this leaflet or are, at least, aware of your wishes.

## Accidents abroad

Overseas travel may increase your chances of having an accident and needing medical treatment which might put you at risk from HIV.

- Drinking and then driving is even more dangerous on unfamiliar roads in a strange car.
- Check that hire cars and motorbikes are in good condition.
- Remember that road conditions and driving standards may be unfamiliar.
- Always wear a seatbelt or a crash helmet and place children in a child restraint.

If you take part in dangerous sports and pastimes take extra care, safety standards may not be as high as those you are used to at home.



## Carrying a medical kit

It is sensible to carry a first aid kit with you but you may also want to take a medical kit containing basic sterile medical equipment for use in an emergency. These kits are available from chemists and independent suppliers. Ask your GP, pharmacist or travel company for details.

## Other HIV risks to avoid

Anything involving puncturing the skin carries a risk as the equipment used may not be sterile.

- So don't have a tattoo, have acupuncture or have your ears pierced .
- Sharing needles and syringes is a major cause of the spread of HIV infection:
- Don't inject unprescribed drugs.
- Don't share equipment.
- If you do, ALWAYS clean everything properly.

## What doesn't give you HIV

HIV cannot be spread through everyday social contact. It can't be passed on through:

- Kissing
- Dirty crockery or food
- Swimming pools
- Insect bites
- Toilet seats
- Coughing or sneezing



Behave sensibly, as you would at home, and you won't put yourself at any extra risk.

Read this leaflet thoroughly.

Carry the Travel Safe Code with you.

And enjoy yourself while staying healthy.

## Further advice for travellers

- Talk to your doctor about vaccinations, anti-malarial treatment and avoiding food and waterborne infections.
- If you haven't had a recent check up go and see your dentist before you go so as to avoid the need for treatment abroad that could put you in contact with HIV.



- Check your medical, personal and motor insurance so that if you do get ill or have an accident you can be properly treated or brought home and not have to run the risk of HIV infection.
- Pack an adequate sun screen.
- Make sure you pack all your documents e.g. tickets, passport, driver's licence, insurance and vaccination certificates.

#### **AIDS and HIV Advice:**

**The Terrence Higgins Trust Helpline** (12 noon - 10pm 0171-242 1010) provides advice and counselling on HIV/AIDS issues. This number can be reached from

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 Media/Distribution: brochure - avail in local info/health centres  
 Endline: Carry the card + follow the code + travel the world HIV safe  
 Notes: card is a curious idea -  
 - some sound advice / promotes UK as HIV safe-haven

calls cost 37p/min cheap rate and 47p/min at all other times.

Data supplied may be used for direct marketing purposes.

**Travel Clinic Healthline** is a 24 hour service run from the Hospital for Tropical Diseases on 0839 337733.

Telephone calls cost 39p/min cheap rate and 49p/min at all other times.

#### **Other leaflets:**

**The Traveller's Guide to Health** (T5) can be obtained by calling the Health Literature Line on 0800 555 777.

Bulk copies (more than 10) of the Travel Safe leaflet and the T5 should be ordered from Department of Health, PO Box 410, Wetherby, LS23 7LN.