

CCG Position Statement

Malaria Prevention Medicines

NHS Lewisham CCG no longer supports the routine prescribing of malaria prevention medicines on the NHS locally, for travel abroad

Why are we doing this?

- To bring local policy back in line with **national guidance** issued by the NHS in 1995
- To **free up clinician consultation time** for people who have more complex healthcare needs and who need more active support in managing their health
- To **ease pressure** on NHS services and help contain costs of medicines on the local NHS budget
- To **raise awareness** of the need for malaria prevention medicines if travelling abroad and appropriately signpost to services who support this (e.g. travel health clinics)

Further information can be found on the NHS Lewisham CCG website > 'Who We Are' > 'Governing Body Papers' within the 'Patient and Public Consultation Report'.

General Medical Council (May 2013) [Good practice in prescribing and managing medicines](#) and devices states the following:

- 'Prescribing' is used to describe many related activities, including supply of prescription only medicines, prescribing medicines, devices and dressings on the NHS and advising patients on the purchase of over the counter medicines and other remedies
- If a patient asks for a treatment that the doctor considers would not be of overall benefit to them, the doctor should discuss the issues with the patient and explore the reasons for their request. If, after discussion, the doctor still considers that the treatment would not be of overall benefit to the patient, they do not have to provide the treatment. But they should explain their reasons to the patient, and explain any other options that are available, including the option to seek a second opinion.

Guidance for prescribers

- NHS patients are entitled to receive free advice on malaria prevention.
- Ensure patients understand and are fully informed of malaria and its prevention methods including medication.
- Patients should also be advised about the importance of mosquito bed nets, suitable clothing and insect repellents such as DEET.
- Inform patients of Public Health England ABCD of malaria prevention:
 - Be **A**ware of the risks
 - Use **B**ite prevention
 - Take **C**hemoprophylaxis (malaria prevention medicine)
 - Seek early **D**iagnostics if you become unwell
- Information on which malaria prevention medicines are necessary or recommended for your patients depending on the area they will be visiting is available from:
 - Travel health Pro (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>)
 - Travax (<http://www.travax.nhs.uk/>)
 - Fir for Travel (www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice.aspx)
- Patients should be advised to purchase or obtain sufficient prophylactic medicines to cover the period of travel, taking into account that malaria prevention medicines are commenced prior to travel, are taken whilst away and continued on return from travel.

- The NHS Standard General Medical Services Contract 2014 states that a GP may accept a fee for prescribing or providing drugs or medicines for malaria prevention.
- The fee should be determined by the practice; it is advisable to develop a practice protocol available to patients in the form of a leaflet or section on the practice website.
- Practices should also give the patient written information on the dosing schedule proposed and the charges involved at the outset of the process.
- If a private prescription to obtain the malaria prevention medicines is being provided, patients should be advised to compare prices as there may be variation in the amount that individual pharmacies will charge to supply the medicines.
- If a practice does not wish to provide a private service for the above mentioned malaria prevention medicines, patients should be advised that they may obtain advice and malaria prevention medicines from private travel clinics and community pharmacies.
- Public Health England has developed practical guidelines for use by healthcare professionals advising travellers on malaria prevention.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/malaria-prevention-guidelines-for-travellers-from-the-uk>
- Public Health England has developed the following leaflets to share with patients:
 - Malaria: information for people travelling overseas
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/malaria-information-for-people-travelling-overseas>
 - Travelling overseas to visit friends and relatives?
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/travelling-overseas-to-visit-friends-and-relatives-health-advice>

Guidance for patients, carers and guardians

- NHS patients are entitled to receive free advice on malaria prevention for travel abroad.
- Seek travel health advice at least 4-6 weeks before travel, but even if time is short it's never too late to get advice
- Community pharmacists can offer travel health advice and sell some malaria prevention medicines. You do not need to make an appointment to see the pharmacist and can be seen in confidence in a private area of the pharmacy, and many pharmacies are open late nights and at the weekend when the doctor's surgery is closed. You can also seek travel health advice and malaria prevention medicines from your GP practice or travel clinic
- A charge may be applied by your GP practice for prescribing "prescription only" malaria prevention medicines on a private prescription. The level of charge applied is at the discretion of the GP practice.
- If you are travelling to an area where mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria exist, make sure you take insect bite avoidance measures including using an insect repellent, covering exposed areas of skin and sleeping under a mosquito bed net.
- A combination of preventive measures will give significant protection against malaria.
- If malaria prevention medicine is required this should be purchased from a reputable source in the UK before travel due to the possibility of medicines being fake or sub-standard abroad.
- Do not assume that you have immunity to diseases such as malaria just because you have previously travelled to or lived in the country you plan to visit. Immunity is rapidly lost after migration to the UK.
- Advice related to malaria prevention, vaccinations and travel health is also available from:
 - Travel Health Pro (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>)
 - Fit for Travel (www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice.aspx)

- NHS Choices (<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions>)
 - Gov.uk – Foreign travel advice (<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>)
 - NHS Lewisham CCG (<http://www.lewishamccg.nhs.uk>)
- Public Health England has developed practical guidelines for use by healthcare professionals advising travellers on malaria prevention but these may also be used by travellers who wish to read about options themselves. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/malaria-prevention-guidelines-for-travellers-from-the-uk>

Comments or complaints

We do all we can to provide good quality health services, but sometimes things don't go as they should. We welcome people telling us about how we can improve, or make a complaint about the service they have received from NHS Lewisham CCG.

We are also very pleased to receive positive feedback and compliments about our work or the quality of health services received as a local resident.

Please Contact:

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Write to: Cantilever House, Eltham Road, London, SE12 8RN