

Travel – a guide for people with acute porphyria

This guide is for people who have an acute hepatic porphyria:

- acute intermittent porphyria
- hereditary coproporphyrinuria
- variegate porphyria
- ALA dehydratase deficiency porphyria

Before you travel

- Get a copy of the [Safe List](#) produced by the UK Porphyria Medicines Information Service (UKPMIS) and the Cardiff Porphyria Service. Take it with you in case you need medication while you are abroad.
- Get in touch with the British Embassy or Consulate closest to your destination to find out about healthcare facilities in the area you are travelling to. If you are ill when you are away you will need access to a hospital and appropriate porphyria care. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) provides contact details for Embassies and Consulates: <https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies>
- Consider using a bracelet, necklace or other item which indicates that you have porphyria. The MedicAlert Foundation has further information: <https://www.medicalert.org.uk> or 01908 951045.

Travel insurance, travel vaccines, preventing malaria and avoiding other risks

- The British Porphyria Association (BPA) has information on travel insurance providers: <http://porphyria.org.uk/> or 0300 30 200 30. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
- Check the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website at least 8 weeks before you travel for information on recommended vaccines and antimalarials for the country or countries you will be visiting. Go to <https://nathnac.net> and follow the links to 'TravelHealthPro' and the country or countries you are going to. This site also provides information on Covid-19 and other risks.

Travel vaccines

Most travel vaccines are safe in acute porphyria. If a live vaccine is recommended for the area you are travelling to, check the Safe List and consider phoning the Welsh Medicines Advice Service on 029 2184 2251 for further information.

Antimalarials that are known to be safe in acute porphyria are:

- chloroquine
- malarone (atovaquone and proguanil)
- mefloquine
- proguanil
- doxycycline

Contact the Welsh Medicines Advice Service if you need any further information.

- Access the latest FCDO country-specific advice on travel abroad here:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

In transit

- While travelling:
 - avoid alcohol, and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids during the flight
 - avoid missing meals – if travel sickness is a problem, try eating small snacks frequently
 - ensure that your meals contain carbohydrate

Travel sickness medicines

The travel sickness medicines hyoscine hydrobromide and promethazine are safe in acute porphyria.

At destination

- If you are travelling to an area where mosquitoes are a problem:
 - use nets and repellent
 - wear clothing that covers the skin such as trousers and long-sleeved shirts
 - avoid going out at dawn and dusk
- Aim to restrict the amount of alcohol you drink and avoid becoming dehydrated by drinking plenty of clean water or other non-alcoholic drinks.
- Take care to avoid getting food poisoning. If you do have vomiting or diarrhoea, take rehydration sachets.
- Try to eat regularly - your appetite may be suppressed when you are in a hot climate.
- Avoid stressful situations whenever possible.

Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.