

There are many sources of information and advice about going away, and you can talk to your MS nurse or doctor about things to consider too. Try some of the information sources below:

www.msactivesource.co.uk

www.msactivesource.ie

www.msdecisions.org.uk

www.msactivesource.co.uk can provide you with some useful sources of information about travel, under the 'Living with MS' section.

The following organisations are also available to help:

Multiple Sclerosis Society
www.mssociety.org.uk
Helpline: 0808 800 8000
email: helpline@mssociety.org.uk

Multiple Sclerosis Trust
www.mstrust.org.uk
Tel: 01462 476700
email: info@mstrust.org.uk

Irish Multiple Sclerosis Society
www.ms-society.ie
Helpline: 1850 233233
email: mshelpline@ms-society.ie



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Thinking about travel



Supporting you
each step of the way

Questions you may have about going away

Just because you've got MS doesn't mean you can't go on holiday, whether you are staying in the UK or going abroad. There are just a few extra things you need to think about and plan beforehand.

■ Does climate affect MS symptoms?

When organising a trip, take into account the climate of your destination. Heat and humidity affect people differently. Some people can feel more tired than usual, their vision might become a bit blurred or they may feel a loss of balance. The most important thing to remember though is although these symptoms can be unpleasant, they don't last and they won't cause any permanent damage.

If you are travelling somewhere warm, there are things you can do to keep yourself cool. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids to avoid getting dehydrated. Using cooling sprays, gels or having cold baths or showers can help increase energy levels. It's best to avoid strenuous exercise if the heat is making you feel unwell.

■ What about medication?

When on your travels, you'll need to be able to explain why you're carrying medication and syringes with you. Your doctor will write a letter to take with you in case you are asked. Don't forget to make an appointment before arranging a trip.

It is important to think about how you will store your medication when going on holiday – not only once you reach your destination but also while you are travelling. Depending on which medication you are taking, there may be certain storage requirements. Some interferon betas need to be kept refrigerated. If you are taking these you will need to travel with a cool bag. If you're flying, remember to keep your cool bag with you as it will freeze in the baggage hold. And don't forget, the cool bag you use must have been validated to ensure the correct temperature is maintained for long enough to keep your medication correctly stored.

Consider how long you will be away for. Will you have enough medication to take with you? If you are away for some time, it may be that you need supplies sent to you while you are on holiday. Discuss this with your doctor or MS nurse as you might have to purchase private prescriptions or arrange special export licences.

■ What about immunisation and vaccination?

There is no reason why you shouldn't have any of the vaccinations needed to travel abroad. You run no more risk of complications with vaccinations than people without MS.

That said, some vaccines should not be given while taking certain medications. Bearing this in mind, always make sure your doctor knows about all the medications you are taking and any vaccinations you are considering.

■ What about holiday insurance?

Before travelling, getting a good insurance policy is important for piece of mind, even if staying in this country. Frequently, companies will try and sell you insurance as part of a package deal. Be careful because these policies often exclude cover if medical problems already exist. It's best to be up front about your health and any changes before your trip. That way you can rest assured that you'll be fully covered.

■ What if I get unwell when I'm away?

Before you leave, it's a good idea to have the details of local hospitals or clinics near to where you are staying. In addition, it may be of value to get in touch with the embassy of the country you intend to visit. If you do have any problems, your own embassy may be able to help you.

■ What other things might I need to consider?

It's sensible to think about whether there is any extra help you may need, both at the airport or where you are staying. Practically speaking, it might be finding ways of avoiding lots of stairs or steep inclines. Advance warning is the best way to make sure your needs are met. It's well worth contacting the airport and travel company before you leave if you have any requests or questions.