



**European visitors to show EHIC  
to access free NHS hospital treatment**



## Under EC Regulations European Visitors should produce an EHC to access free healthcare that is clinically necessary

This leaflet has been compiled for permanent residents of European Economic Area Member States and Switzerland visiting the UK who require medically necessary hospital treatment during that visit.

- **Visitors from EEA member states\* should show a valid European Health Insurance Card to access free healthcare**
- **This entitles them to reduced cost, or free treatment for conditions that need to be treated during the visit which cannot wait for treatment until return home**
- **Planned treatment needs to be arranged separately through your home country's healthcare system**
- **If you do not have an EHC with you then apply through your home country's healthcare system immediately for a Provisional Replacement Certificate**
- **If you cannot show either an EHC or PRC you may be liable to pay for treatment although you might get a refund from your home country's healthcare system on your return**

### EHC Requirement under EC Regulations

Like all other EEA Member States, the UK now requires evidence of a valid EHC for access to reduced cost or, sometimes free, state healthcare, which becomes necessary during a visit. This is in line with EC regulations.

The National Health Service primarily provides healthcare for people who live in the United Kingdom. So please make sure you have a valid EHC card ready to show admission staff.



## What treatment is covered?

Treatment covered by an EHIC is that which is seen to be clinically necessary in the opinion of a doctor or dentist employed by the trust. The card also covers pre-existing conditions including routine monitoring of conditions such as diabetes. Although also covered by the card, anyone requiring dialysis or oxygen therapy must make arrangements prior to departure from their home member state.

## If you want to come to the UK for planned treatment under EC Regulations

If you want to come to the UK for free planned treatment your EHIC will not cover you. Free planned elective treatment in the UK for EEA citizens needs to be arranged through your home healthcare system prior to travelling to the UK. Your home healthcare system will need to arrange for you to have a valid E112 form to receive the agreed free planned treatment at a specified UK hospital. If you seek planned treatment and you do not have an E112 you may be charged.

## If you have permanent residential status in an EEA member state but do not have an EHIC

If you have an EHIC but have lost or forgotten to bring it with you to hospital, you can apply for a Provisional Replacement Certificate immediately. You will need to contact your home healthcare system and ask them to fax a PRC to the hospital where you require treatment. It is your responsibility to make these arrangements not the hospital trust. On receipt of a valid PRC you will receive exactly the same eligibility for reduced cost or free treatment as if you had your EHIC with you.

## If you do not have a valid EHIC or cannot obtain a PRC

If you cannot show a valid EHIC or PRC you may be charged for all secondary care during your hospital visit. However, under UK domestic Regulations, if you are a student or working here you may qualify for free treatment. If you are lawfully resident in the EEA you may qualify for some treatment free of charge but less than if you show an EHIC.

Certain services are exempt from charges, including care provided in the Accident & Emergency Department if required. Almost all other care including emergency treatment is chargeable. Most EEA permanent residents will be able to obtain a refund for all or part of their treatment when they return home, from their healthcare insurance provider, however the Hospital Trust will require payment from any patient who cannot produce an EHIC or PRC, or who cannot prove entitlement under UK domestic Regulations at the time of their treatment.

## For Further Information

Please contact the Overseas Visitors Manager.

## EEA Member States and Switzerland\*

Eligible residents of EEA member states are able to apply for an EHIC. EEA member states are:

**Austria**  
**Belgium**  
**Bulgaria**  
**Cyprus (southern)**  
**Czech Republic**  
**Denmark**  
**Estonia**  
**Finland**  
**France**  
**Germany**  
**Greece**  
**Hungary**  
**Iceland**  
**Ireland**  
**Italy**  
**Latvia**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Lithuania**  
**Luxembourg**  
**Malta**  
**Netherlands**  
**Norway**  
**Poland**  
**Portugal**  
**Romania**  
**Slovakia**  
**Slovenia**  
**Spain**  
**Sweden**

Eligible residents in Switzerland are also able to apply for an EHIC from the authorities there.



**Disclaimer**

This leaflet is a general guide and is not a full statement of the current regulations. Please ask at the hospital providing treatment for further information or see the Department of Health website at [www.dh.gov.uk/overseasvisitors](http://www.dh.gov.uk/overseasvisitors).