

## Getting supplies of your anti-epileptic drugs outside the UK

### Contents

- Introduction
- Prescriptions
- Anti-epileptic drugs
- If your anti-epileptic drugs are available in the country you are visiting
- If your anti-epileptic drugs are not available in the country you are visiting

### Introduction

This fact sheet gives information on different ways that you may be able to get your anti-epileptic drugs outside the UK.

### Prescriptions

There are NHS restrictions on prescribing when someone is out of the UK for extended periods. Your GP will decide how long they will give you a prescription for. This could be for up to three months. Once someone has been out of the UK for three months or more, the GP is not able to provide an NHS prescription. They may also take the patient off their register.

### Anti-epileptic drugs

Anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) that are available in the UK may not be available in other countries, or they may be known by a different name. On long trips it's advisable to find out, before you travel, if your AEDs are available in each country you're visiting, and what they're called. You can do this by phoning the drug companies that make your AEDs. Contact Epilepsy Action for details.

### If your anti-epileptic drugs are available in the country you are visiting

You can get a private prescription from a doctor in that country. Take a copy of your usual prescription, or a note from your GP, to give to the doctor abroad.

### If your anti-epileptic drugs are not available in the country you are visiting

You will need to find out if the country has an import licence or special authorisation. The companies that make your anti-epileptic drugs, Idis Ltd or John Bell & Croyden can give you this information.

- Idis Ltd, Idis House, Churchfield Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8DB.  
Telephone: 01932 824 000;  
enquiries@idispharma.com  
www.idispharma.com
- John Bell & Croyden, 50-54 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2AU.  
Telephone: 020 7935 5555;  
jbc@johnbellcroyden.co.uk;  
www.johnbellcroyden.co.uk

If the country you are visiting does have an import licence you may be able to arrange to get your anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) in one of three ways.

- While you are away, a UK GP may be able to write a private prescription to be sent to John Bell & Croyden. This company can then send your AEDs directly to you. You would need to organise all this before leaving the UK.
- In some countries you may be able to get your prescription directly from a pharmacist.
- You could organise and pay privately for a doctor abroad to write a prescription for you. The doctor could then arrange for John Bell & Croyden or Idis to send the drugs directly to them for you to collect. It is advisable to check with John Bell & Croyden or Idis if this will be possible, in the country or countries you are visiting, before you travel.

If the country you are visiting doesn't have an import licence, you have two choices.

- You could change to other manufacturers' versions of the same drugs. This is if they are available and if the country has an import licence for your anti-epileptic drugs. This could affect seizure control and/or side-effects.

or

- You could reconsider whether to go to that particular country.

### About this publication

This fact sheet is written by Epilepsy Action's advice and information team, with guidance and input from people living with epilepsy and medical experts. If you would like to know where our information is from, or there is anything you would like to say about the fact sheet, please contact us.

Epilepsy Action makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of information in its publications but cannot be held liable for any actions taken based on this information.

**Date:** March 2011

**Due for review:** March 2013

**Code:** F022A.01

### Acknowledgements

Epilepsy Action would like to thank Lesley McCoy, Epilepsy Nurse Specialist, Durham, for her contribution to this fact sheet. Lesley McCoy has no conflict of interest.

### Epilepsy Helpline

freephone 0800 800 5050 text 07797 805 390  
helpline@epilepsy.org.uk www.epilepsy.org.uk

Epilepsy Action, New Anstey House,  
Gate Way Drive, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7XY  
tel. 0113 210 8800 fax 0113 391 0300

A company limited by guarantee (registered in England No. 797997)

Registered charity in England (No. 234343)

© Copyright Epilepsy Action 2011



Certified member

This organisation has been certified as a producer of reliable health and social care information.  
www.theinformationstandard.org