

From the Acting Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Elizabeth Mitchell



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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## URGENT COMMUNICATION

**HSS(MD) 30/2006**

To: All General Practitioners – for cascade to staff including sessional doctors  
Community Pharmacists  
Directors of Public Health HSS Boards  
Medical Directors of HSS Trusts – for cascade to all Doctors  
Directors of Nursing in HSS Boards and Trusts  
Directors of Pharmacy in HSS Boards and Trusts  
Directors of Primary Care in HSS Boards for cascade to Out of Hours Services, Prescribing Advisers and GP Advisers  
Nurse Prescribing Advisors Health and Social Services Boards

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Your Ref:  
Our Ref: HSS(MD) 30/2006  
Date: 11 August 2006

Dear Colleague

### **PROCEDURE FOR TAKING ESSENTIAL MEDICINES ON FLIGHTS IN THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION**

Further to the change in security procedures at UK airports, and the need to check all luggage into the hold, the issue of medicines essential for the flight has arisen. The Department of Health has been in discussion with the Department for Transport and has agreed the following procedure.

Passengers will be discouraged from carrying medicines and medical items in the cabin unless they are essential for the period from flight check-in to retrieving their luggage at destination. All other medication should be packed in hold luggage. People may be advised to pack fluids in a small coolpack.

Medicines that are in tablet or powder/inhaler form [up to 50 grammes] can be carried in the cabin.

If a passenger claims liquid, cream or gel medicines that they are carrying are sufficient and essential for the flight then they will be allowed to carry them provided that either:

- A. The total amount they wish to take on board is below 50 ml, in its original container, eg GTN spray.
- or
- B. If the fluid is more than 50 mls, the material can be tested or satisfactorily verified as described below.

In order to verify the contents of medicine containers adult passengers will be asked to taste their own medicines. Plastic cups will be provided at the airports but passengers may chose to take their own plastic spoons for this purpose.

Adults accompanying children will be asked to taste non-prescription medicines for children eg cough medication, ibuprofen or paracetamol, if they are not allergic to them or have any contraindications to taking them.

Passengers carrying medicines that do not fall into these categories will be subject to further verification and security checks.

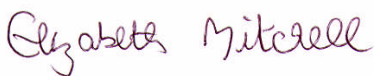
GPs and pharmacists will wish to ensure that, where possible, passengers are carrying medication in tablet or patch form sufficient for the duration of the flight and advise patients on which medicines need to be taken within the time from check-in to baggage retrieval [assume 4 hrs on top of flight time].

In a very small number of cases, it is possible that security staff will seek to verify the need for medicines with the prescriber before permitting travel.

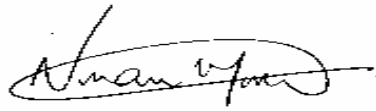
We do not know how long these arrangements will be in place.

Many thanks for your help with this issue.

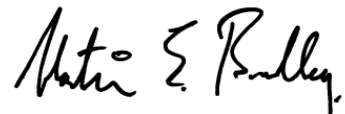
Yours sincerely



**Dr Elizabeth Mitchell**  
Chief Medical Officer (Acting)



**Dr Norman Morrow**  
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer



**Mr Martin Bradley**  
Chief Nursing Officer

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