

## Flying home and what to expect

For children being repatriated home from overseas

### When will my child be ready to fly back to the UK?

In collaboration with yourselves, Lia's Wings will decide on the most appropriate time for your child to be flown safely back to the UK. Your child's safety will always be the priority, but your family's situation will also be considered when deciding the right time to return to the UK. Life abroad may be very difficult; a parent may need to return to work, and there may be other children to think about. A planned flight back to NHS care may also help limit costs compared with ongoing medical fees overseas.

### How will my child be taken to the UK?

There are various options for travel; the best option will depend on your child's condition. Cost is also considered.

Usually, at least one parent can fly with their child. As long as your child is doing well, you will be able to sit next to them, talk to them and touch them. Parents often like to take photos to share with family and friends. Having your own private plane for the day is pretty rare!



**Private Air Ambulance** - A private air ambulance is a small, specially equipped aircraft that functions as a flying intensive care unit. It carries all essential medical equipment, along with a senior paediatric doctor or practitioner and a paediatric nurse. This option is suitable for children with complex conditions or severe injuries, but can be expensive, particularly over long distances. It may also be the best choice even for a stable child, helping to avoid the risk of delays or cancellations with commercial flights.

## How will my child be taken to the UK? (Continued)



**Commercial Medical Escort** - Most airlines will allow your child to travel with the right medical team taking responsibility for their care. Most children who are fit for commercial medical escort are ready to be discharged from medical care soon. The team will bring basic resuscitation equipment, but will not be able to give advanced care. Lia's Wings will make the assessment as to whether your child is fit to travel in this way.

## What are the risks of a medical flight?

The risks of a medical flight can be thought of in terms of the flight itself, things that could affect the baby during the flight, and how the flight might affect the baby afterwards.

### Risks of the flight

When anybody travels in an aeroplane, there is always a degree of risk, just like travelling in a car or even walking down the street carries risk. Specifically for air travel, this includes:

- Delays and cancellations that mean you have to wait for another time or day to fly
- Loss of cabin pressure requiring oxygen masks for passengers
- Problems with the plane leading to an emergency landing
- Ditching, which means an emergency landing in water

### Risks during the flight

- At high altitude, the air is less dense, so some children may need more oxygen
- When the air is less dense, air inside the body can expand and cause pain
- Noise, vibration and acceleration can cause stress to a child
- Unexpected deterioration requiring emergency medical treatment

We do our best to minimise all risks and ensure your child's aeromedical transfer is as safe and comfortable as possible. We can answer any questions you may have to put your mind at ease.

