

Travelling and diabetes

Information for patients and families

Trips with insulin need some extra planning. This handout includes some things to consider before you head out on your trip and while you are away.

How should I prepare for my trip?

- **Travel letter:** Get a travel letter from your doctor or diabetes educator. It will say that you have diabetes and list the supplies you need to carry with you.
- **Make a plan on how to store your insulin while you are away:** Does your accommodation have a fridge? If not, you could use Frio™ wallets to keep your insulin cool. Remember you must keep unopened insulin between 2 to 8 degrees Celsius. Protect your insulin from freezing and from high heat.
- **Pack extra supplies:** It is always better to have more supplies than to run out. Some of the supplies you might need:

- ✓ Blood sugar meter
- ✓ Insulin pens
- ✓ Test Strips
- ✓ Glucagon Kit

Supplies for pumpers:

- ✓ Infusion sets
- ✓ Syringes
- ✓ Long-acting insulin
- ✓ Batteries

- **Pack all your diabetes supplies in your carry-on luggage:**
Sensors, transmitters and insulin pumps cannot go through x-ray machines. If wearing a sensor, tell security why you cannot go through the x-ray. Ask for hand wanding or a pat-down.
- **Carry identification:** Consider a medic alert. This tells someone that you have diabetes if you are not able to tell them yourself.
- **Pack a copy of the Sick Day and Pump Failure handout:**
- **Get a copy from your diabetes educator or find it on our website**

Plan for emergencies:

- How will you deal with an emergency such as illness, lost or compromised insulin (insulin exposed to extreme heat or cold)?
- Do you know where the nearest pharmacy, hospital or health clinics are? A pharmacy may dispense insulin without a prescription. If not, you will have to go to a local health clinic or hospital.

For pumpers only:

- Consider getting a loaner pump (contact the pump manufacturer).
- Add your pump to your home insurance.
- Calculate what dose of long-acting insulin you would need if your pump failed.
- Remember: Sensors, transmitters and pumps in your carry-on luggage should not go through baggage x-ray machines.

What should I do while I am travelling?

- Keep your medicine in the original package with pharmacy labels.
- Keep opened insulin between 4 to 30 degrees Celsius.
- Carry multiple treatments for low blood sugar as well as extra snacks.
- Check your blood sugar often. It can be affected by more activity, different foods, hot climates, and travelling to different time zones.
- Take less insulin if you are more active. If you are on a pump, consider using a temporary basal rate. If you are on injections, you may need to decrease your insulin doses.