

Preparing for Travel with Diabetes

You will need to make some adjustments to standard travel plans if you have diabetes. These tweaks to preparing for travel will help make your trip safe and enjoyable. Some of the points below may not apply to you. Please consider the ones that do.

Getting Ready

- **See your diabetes educator and doctor 4-6 weeks before your trip.** They can help with possible medication adjustments and planning for changes to your diet and physical activity.
- If you are traveling with someone else, ensure they know what to do during an emergency.
- **Know your eating plan well** and know what your usual serving sizes look like.
- Ask your doctor for **prescriptions and a letter outlining your diabetes treatment plan.**
- Buy **health insurance** for out-of-country travel. Some credit cards offer this along with trip cancellation, etc. Please note that some insurance companies will not cover you if you have a pre-existing condition. Extra travel insurance may be required in these cases.
- Obtain a **loaner insulin pump** from your manufacturer. Pumps are only sent within Canada.
- **Read the manuals for your devices** so you know how traveling will impact their functions. Write down your normal settings in case you need to input or adjust them later.
- Make sure you have all of the **vaccines** required to travel to your destination country.
- Take **anti-malaria drugs** if recommended for your destination country.
- Find out what kind of **medical services and supplies** are **available at your destination.**
- Research the **rules for security and permitted items at airports** you will enter during your trip.
- Consider **registering as a Canadian abroad** on the Government of Canada website.
- Check with the manufacturer of your insulin pump that your pump can safely go through scanners and x-ray machines at the airport.
- **Drink lots of fluids** in the 1-2 days prior to your flight, during your flight, and after your flight.
- If you are traveling with others, **split up the supplies** between yourselves.
- **Pack your diabetes supplies in your hand luggage and carry them on the plane with you.** Do not pack them in your suitcase or checked luggage because they may be lost or damaged.

Packing Checklist

Begin packing as early as possible to avoid forgetting items and needing last-minute purchases.

- Letter from your doctor describing your condition(s) and the medications you are taking
- Medical identification (for example, a bracelet or wallet card)
- Clearly labeled diabetes medications and blood testing equipment (double what is needed).
- Loaner insulin pump from your pump manufacturer
- Enough insulin and pens/syringes for twice the duration of your trip. This is important, even if you use a pump, because the pump may malfunction, become lost, or you may want to take a break from using the pump at some point during your trip.
- Extra batteries and charging cables for electronic medical and non-medical devices
- Medications to take if you have diarrhea, nausea, fever, pain, or other symptoms
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- First aid kit and a foot care kit that includes blister bandages, alcohol wipes, and Polysporin®
- Supply of quick-acting sugar and supply of emergency glucagon
- Snacks (for example, juice boxes, granola bars, dried fruit, crackers, cookies)
- Comfortable walking shoes (worn regularly for at least one month) and cotton socks
- Ketone strips
- Frio® packs or Breezy® packs if a fridge is not available or electricity is unreliable
- A MedAngel® Smart Thermometer to monitor the storage temperature of medication
- A sharps container or large metal water bottle to hold used syringes and needles
- A "Grab and Go" bag in case you must leave your destination residence for an emergency
- Translation phrase book if you are visiting a country where you do not speak the language. Learn to say phrases including "I have diabetes" and "juice please" in case of emergencies
- Download a translation app on your phone to help you communicate while out of the country