

# Pre-Travel Medical Appointments

It is important to see your doctor and your diabetes educator 4-6 weeks prior to a trip so they can help you prepare. Here are some things to keep in mind for these appointments. Some of the points below may not apply to you. Please consider the ones that do.

## Before Your Appointments

- **Research your travel destination.** Factors such as **climate, transportation, storage, and available medical services** will play a role in how to best manage your diabetes.
- Write down the **plans for your flight, eating, and activities** you will be doing on your trip.

## With Your Doctor

- Complete a **routine checkup** to ensure you are in good enough health to travel safely.
- Obtain a **travel letter** from your doctor that states you have diabetes and describes the medical items you must bring on your trip.
- Obtain **prescriptions** from your doctor for double the amount of any medications you think you will need. Have the prescriptions' names written as their generic names or as the names of the brand in the country you will be going to.
- See if there are any **vaccinations or medications** (such as anti-malaria medication) that you must take before travelling. Some vaccinations take **up to a year** to be fully completed, so make sure you plan ahead and schedule them ahead of time.

## With Your Diabetes Educator

- Discuss **how to adjust your insulin regimen** while traveling and when you first arrive at your destination.
- **Describe the location and the weather** you expect during your trip. Temperature, **elevation**, and other factors can impact how to best manage your blood sugars.
- Describe **what you expect to be eating** while on your trip and **what you are currently eating**. Your diabetes educator can explain how your medication needs may change.

- Describe the **physical activity you expect to be doing on your trip**. This can include walking around more than usual or other activities like hiking and sailing. Changes to physical activity may also change how much insulin you need to use and how much food you need to eat. Your diabetes educator can see if adjustments are necessary.
- Discuss your **pump settings and daily insulin totals**. Make sure to record them. Your pump settings will be important to have in case your pump malfunctions, your pump is lost, or you would like to take a break from using a pump for any reason (such as being in water or on a beach for the day). Knowing your pump settings and daily insulin totals will make it easier to know how much insulin to use if you are switching to multiple daily injections with pens. Order a loaner pump ahead of your trip just in case yours fails while on your trip.
- Discuss **how much insulin and how many pens/syringes to bring**. 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.
- Ask **where and how you may be able to store your insulin and other medications** to keep them cool if you are travelling to a hot country. Many hotels do not have fridges in the room, so ask at the front desk if they can hold your medications in their kitchen fridges, including your ice packs.
- Discuss your **correction factor** (insulin sensitivity) and **insulin to carbohydrate ratio**.
- **Discuss what to do in the event of an emergency**. If you are traveling with someone else, ensure that they are also aware of what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Complete a **foot care screening** and complete any necessary treatment prior to your trip. Discuss if there is anything specific you should do to care for your feet while on your trip.
- Review **Diabetes Canada's Sick Day Guidelines** in case you become ill during your trip.