

Going on a trip?

– A guide to travelling well

The information contained in this travel guide may answer some of your questions if you are planning a holiday. Remember you should always consult your Diabetes Care Team if you are in doubt about any aspect of your diabetes care.

Travelling Abroad

It is important to know that not all countries use the same types of insulin as you have available in Canada.

It is advised to contact the manufacturer of the insulin you use to check what is available in the country you are travelling to.

Carry a prescription from your doctor for all diabetes supplies that you will be carrying. Keep in on you at all times. Make sure that the name on the prescription matches the one on your ticket.

VIP!

It is recommended that you take at least double your required amounts of insulin and the equipment that you use to allow for any situation that may arise.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are recommended when travelling to certain countries. You should check with your travel agent and GP if these are required.

Time Zones

Preparing for a long journey does require more thought. If you are crossing time zones, you are right to be concerned about your insulin regime. Remember: eastward travel means a shorter day. If you inject insulin, less may be needed. Westward travel means a longer day, so more insulin may be needed. And, as a general rule, reset your watch when you land. Ask your Diabetes Care Team for specific instructions.



Airport Security

Due to recent increases in airport security, you are no longer allowed to carry liquids or gels >100mL. It will be easier to carry glucose tabs (instead of juice) in the event of a low blood sugar.

It is important that you have a letter from your Doctor confirming you have diabetes, as you will need to let check-in staff know in order for you to carry pen needles or syringes in your carry-on.

Ensure that all of your medication is in it's original container and labelled properly with the same name that is on your ticket.

Customs

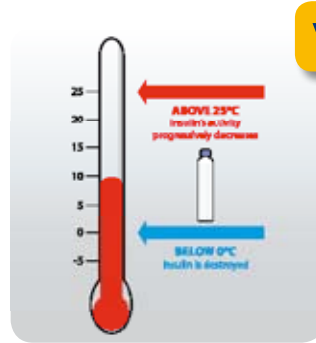
You are not required by law to declare your insulin or other equipment. To prevent unnecessary confusion it is a good idea to wear an ID (i.e. MedicAlert) that states that you have diabetes. For some countries you will also need an official letter from your Doctor describing your diabetes plan.



VIP!

If your insulin cannot be refrigerated for the flight, don't panic. It will last at room temperature for up to a month.* Do not keep the needle on your insulin pen between injections. This can leave an open passage to the insulin, allowing insulin to leak out and/or air to be drawn into the cartridge.

* Refer to the instructions of the insulin manufacturer



Insurance

Insurance is vital when travelling abroad to cover medical services and equipment. A travel insurance package that does not exclude pre-existing illness should be obtained. Check with your insurance company or, contact the Canadian Diabetes Association for assistance.

Diet

Airlines are generally helpful when arranging meals and will usually offer healthy alternatives. If you have the option to select your meals at the time of booking, it will be easier to plan accordingly. However, it is still recommended for you to pack your own supply of carbohydrate containing snacks in your carry-on (e.g. trail bars, fruit, crackers) in case of an emergency or delay.

It may be useful for you to find out the carbohydrate content of several typical foods from the country you are travelling to. Ask your dietitian for help.



Did you know: insulin is often absorbed faster in hot climates

Illness

If you suffer from travel sickness you should still take your appropriate medication as directed. Management of travel sickness/diarrhea should be discussed with your Diabetes Care Team prior to travelling. If sickness and/or diarrhea develop, you can substitute solid foods with carbohydrate containing fluids i.e. sugary drinks.

Never stop your insulin even if you cannot tolerate solid foods.

You should monitor your blood sugar levels frequently and adjust insulin as appropriate. If you have Type 1 Diabetes, remember to take your ketone testing equipment with you. If sickness and/or diarrhea persist you **should seek medical advice.**



Climate

If travelling to a warmer climate, you should know that:

- insulin may be absorbed faster in warmer climates so regular monitoring is especially important
- insulin should be kept out of direct sunlight
- some blood testing strips may inaccurately read higher in very hot weather

Remember to:

- use sun screen and avoid walking barefoot on the beach (because it is especially important to avoid damage to the skin)
- drink plenty of fluid to replace that lost by sweating

If travelling to a cooler climate you should know that:

- insulin should not be allowed to freeze, as its activity will drop
- some blood testing strips may inaccurately read lower in very cold weather

Remember to:

- wear warm socks and sensible shoes to avoid injury to the feet

Holiday Checklist what to remember travelling abroad

- ☐ Do you have an appropriate container for storing your insulin?
- ☐ Have you packed a spare pen and pen needles or syringes and vial of insulin in case of any pen breakage?
- ☐ Are the carbohydrates packed in your hand luggage enough to cover the airline meals and any delay?
- ☐ Do you have ID and/or a medical letter from your Doctor to show that you have diabetes?
- ☐ Are you travelling within an organized tour group? Have you informed the tour group leader about your diabetes?
- ☐ Have you noted the address and telephone number of the Diabetes Association in the country you are visiting in case you should require any advice during your stay?
- ☐ Have you asked your Diabetes Care Team, prior to your holiday if you have any aspects of travelling abroad you needed to discuss?

Further information:

Canadian Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.ca
1.800.BANTING

Diabetes Québec

www.diabete.qc.ca
1.800.361.3504

BD Medical - Diabetes Care
2100 Derry Road W. Suite 100
Mississauga, ON L5N 0B3
www.BDDiabetes.ca

VIP!

MediAlert

For your safety and peace of mind, consider MediAlert. A MediAlert ID instantly alerts emergency responders of your condition which could help save your life.

www.medicalert.ca
1.800.668.1507

MediAlert is recognized by health professionals all over the world. Contact MediAlert to learn more.

Don't forget to ask your Diabetes Educator about our range of booklets.



Customer Service

1.866.979.9408

Your healthcare team contact details:

Names:

Tel:



Helping all people
live healthy lives



Helping all people
live healthy lives

Living Well with diabetes



Planning a holiday?

Winter skiing, short breaks, long haul flights and exotic summer vacations all need to be planned carefully if you have diabetes and use insulin.