Traveling with Diabetes

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Objectives

Learn how to **plan ahead** when traveling with diabetes

Learn how to travel with **medication and testing supplies**

Understand the **impact of lifestyle changes** on your blood sugars while traveling
Where are you going?
Where do I start?
Be Prepared!

Do your research about your travel site

1. What kind of accommodations will you stay in?
2. What kind of access to food and exercise will you have?
3. How will you get there?
4. What hospitals/pharmacies are nearby?
5. How can you access emergency medications if needed?
Health Considerations

• Consult with your doctor if needed, to ensure you’re in good health to travel

• Consider length and location of trip

• Look into required vaccines

• Consider COVID19 testing and vaccination records

• Check CDC travel website for international trips

  https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel
CDC Travel Website

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel
Things You May Need

- Medical ID bracelet
- List of local hospitals/pharmacies
- Health Insurance information
- Documentation of your health conditions and medications
  (+/- letter from your doctor stating that you have diabetes and why you need your medical supplies)
- Other prescriptions may be needed for the location of your travel
  - Vaccines
  - Antibiotics
  - Anti-diarrheals
  - Altitude or motion sickness medications
Preparing Medications

• Go to your pharmacy for extra or early supply of medications at least 2 weeks in advance
  • Ask your pharmacy how to get a “vacation supply” of your chronic medications and testing supplies

• Domestic retail pharmacies may be able to transfer prescriptions across states

• Research your travel area for laws on how to obtain extra (diabetes) medications if needed for outside countries

• Resources for English-speaking doctors in foreign countries
  • International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT)
    https://www.iamat.org/general-resources
  • International Society of Travel Medicine
    https://www.istm.org/AF_CstmClinicDirectory.asp
Traveling with Medications

**Keep your diabetes supplies**
in a carry-on bag with you at all times

- Medications / Insulin
- Glucose meter or reader
- Glucose tablets or other treatment
- Healthy snacks

**Consider a cooling pack**
to transport refrigerated medications

- NO ice pack
- Frio Insulin Cooler

**Remember most insulin or injectable diabetes medications can be left at room temperature for up to 14-28 days**
Packing for Your Trip

Bring your medications in the original bottles or ask your pharmacist to print out extra labels to put on plastic bags.

Glucose tablets or gummy/hard candies for low blood sugar.

Extra testing supplies:
- Test strips
- Lancets
- Injectable medication needles or syringes
- Pump supplies
- Alcohol pads
- CGM sensors
- Chargers/cables for your CGM
- Glucose meter if you usually use CGM
Packing for Your Trip

Comfortable, well-supported shoes and socks

Over-the-counter basics

• First aid supplies
• Antibiotic ointment
• Sunscreen / bug spray
• Anti-itch medications
• Anti-diarrhea medications
• Antacids
I’m halfway there...
People with diabetes are exempt from the 3.4 oz. liquid rule for:

- Medications and testing supplies
- Gel packs to keep insulin cool

*Inform TSA Agent before screening
*Label and separate items for ease of screening

CGM or insulin pump could be damaged going through the X-ray machine

- Request metal detector check or hand inspection instead
- Consider TSA pre-check® to make the security process easier

Do not store your diabetes medications/supplies in your checked bag

- Some medications can be damaged by extreme temperatures/ pressure
On the Road

Pack a cooler with healthy foods and plenty of water to drink.

Do not keep diabetes medications and testing supplies in direct sunlight or in a hot car.

Set alarms on your phone for taking medicine if you’re traveling across time zones.
I made it!
Where’s the beach?
Readjust to Your New Schedule

Reschedule your medications as needed to your new time zone
• May need more or less insulin – talk to your provider

Monitor your blood sugar more than usual!!!

Expect the unexpected

Blood sugars can fluctuate with changes
• Food
• Exercise/activity
• Sleep
• Stress
• Hydration status
• Medications
Plan Around Your Activities

- Hiking
- Laying out on a hot beach
- Walking on a city tour
- Visiting family at their home
- Sleeping in
What Should I Eat?

Enjoy, but don’t overdo
• Try to avoid buffets
• Keep alcohol in moderation

Space out your meals

Recognize your carbs
• Grains
• Fruits
• Starchy vegetables
• Dairy products
• Sweets
• Sauces
• +/- Alcoholic drinks

Listen to Your Body

- **Remember the signs** of low and high blood sugar
- **Monitor your blood sugars**
- **Check your feet** daily
- **Don’t forget to drink water**
- **Enjoy yourself!**
  Lower stress → lower blood sugars!
Resources

CDC Travel Site
https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel

CDC Travel information for Diabetes

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International Society of Travel Medicine
https://www.istm.org/AF_CstmClinicDirectory.asp

TSA Travel Tips
https://www.tsa.gov/travel/travel-tips
Questions?