

# Travel and Diabetes

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## *Type 1 and Type 2*

### **How can I get ready for travel?**

Traveling with diabetes means planning ahead. Here are a few tips:

- **See your doctor about a month before you leave.** You may need a check-up and shots if you are leaving the country.
- **Ask your doctor to sign a letter explaining your treatment plan and medicines. You should also get extra prescriptions for:**
  - diabetes medicine and insulin, if you take it
  - blood glucose meter and testing supplies
  - insulin supplies, if needed
  - medicines for nausea and vomiting.
- **Pack an extra week's worth of medicines and supplies for your trip.** See the [Packing List for Travelers](#) below.
- **Tell the people you are traveling with about your diabetes and treatment plan.**
- **Find out how and where to get medical care where you will be traveling.**

### ***What should I keep with me during travel?***

Carry all of your diabetes supplies with you, especially your medicines. Use a carry-on bag for air travel. Never pack supplies in your checked bags.

Set aside a few days' worth of supplies in another place—in a handbag or with a travel partner—in case the items you carry are lost or stolen.

Besides your diabetes supplies:

- Always carry some form of carbohydrate to treat low blood glucose (hypoglycemia).
- Carry some food and snacks in case a flight is cancelled, meals are delayed or places that sell food are closed.
- Carry your doctor's name, phone number and fax number, along with your own address and phone number.
- Bring your medical insurance card and an emergency contact.
- Make sure you have a medical identification (ID) bracelet or necklace and a wallet card with you at all times.

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### ***Can I take needles, lancets, insulin and other medicines on an airplane?***

Yes, but you will need to do the following:

- **Keep your insulin and other medicines in their original packages.** Each package must have a printed prescription label.
- **Make sure your glucose meter has the brand name on it.**

### ***How can I manage diabetes away from home?***

- **Protect your feet.** Wear shoes that fit well, and take at least two pairs of shoes with you. Make sure your shoes have been broken in and are comfortable. Bring sandals, flip-flops or swim shoes for the beach and hotel room.
- **Protect your skin from sunburn.** Bring sunscreen and wear it. Remember that the tops of your feet and head can burn, too. Cover your feet and wear a hat.
- **Protect your eyes with sunglasses.**
- **Plan to rest and exercise properly during your trip.** No matter how you travel, stretch and walk around every one to two hours.
- **Be ready to treat low blood glucose if you are more active than usual on your trip.** Carry a carbohydrate with you at all times, and tell a travel partner how to help in case of an emergency. You may need more food or less insulin if you are more active than normal.
- **Check your blood glucose often.** Because you are changing your routine, you will need to check your blood glucose more often than usual. Throw away any used needles and lancets in a safe manner.

### ***What about insulin?***

If you take insulin and you will cross a time zone during your trip, talk with your diabetes care team at least two weeks before you leave. Ask them how to adjust your treatment plan.

If you wear an insulin pump, change the time on your pump to the local time. You will need to adjust your insulin as your meal times, sleep times and blood glucose levels change.

#### **Packing List for Travelers**

- Written prescriptions for insulin, medicines and other supplies
- Blood glucose testing supplies
- Insulin, insulin supplies and glucagon
- A “poke-proof” sharps container
- Medicines
- Foods that contain carbohydrate
- Phone numbers for local clinics and hospitals that can provide medical care, if you need it while traveling
- Your doctor’s name, phone number and fax number
- Your own address and phone number, as well as an emergency name, address and phone number
- Medical ID
- Your medical insurance card
- Two pairs of shoes, plus sandals
- Sunglasses and sunscreen