



Have Diabetes? will travel.

GETTING READY TO TRAVEL? PLANNING AHEAD is the key to successful diabetes management. Thinking about what kind of traveling you will be doing, what food choices will be available to you, and what kind of activities your trip will have you engaged in all-important factors to consider.

When traveling, expect the unexpected. With air travel it's always important to keep the new travel security restrictions in mind. Have your doctor compose a letter including all of your prescription and non-prescription diabetic items to ensure that they make it through security. Using your legal name on your ticket as well as pre-

scription labels will avoid confusion. If you are planning on flying out of the country, check with your destination country to see what their regulations state; this way you can avoid the risk of something getting confiscated upon arrival. The Transportation Security Administration that governs safe air travel changes its rules as world events take place, so being up to date on these regulations will help you avoid potential headaches on travel day.

When purchasing your ticket, keep in mind that airline diabetic meals are not necessarily appropriate for everyone with diabetes. Often times they are too low in

carbohydrates. Depending on the dietary plan you and your healthcare team have decided on, you may be better off choosing the regular meal. Short flights usually offer minuscule snacking options. To avoid having low blood sugars and being overly hungry by the time you do get to have a meal, bringing your own healthy snacks for the flight is a good idea. Alerting the airline of your health condition in case of emergency is also a good precaution to take. Additionally, packing diabetes supplies in carry-on luggage rather than checked luggage avoids the risk of getting separated from your supplies. This carry-on should be within easy reach from your seat on the plane. It is a better idea to store it under your seat as items stowed overhead may shift during flight, and a carry-on stowed beneath the seat will be much more accessible when needed.

If you are planning a road trip, make sure you pick your travel partner or partners wisely. They should be aware of what to do in case of an emergency and understand your dietary and medical needs. It is a good idea to stop the car every several hours or so to get out, stretch and walk a little bit to promote blood circulation. Try to pack your favorite healthy snacks and foods items from home such as fruit, cheese and crackers, cut veggies, nuts and bottled water to lessen the temptation of convenience stores and the drive-thru.

When staying with friends and relatives or traveling for business, you are often not in control of the food options. Portion

control will lessen the impact on your blood sugar, regardless of the foods available. For example, if there are mashed potatoes on the menu, make your portion about ½ a cup. If there is pie for dessert and you really want a piece, skip the potatoes and save your carbohydrates for the pie. Keep an eye on sauces and gravies being used; ask for yours on the side if possible. When eating out, remember to ask for half portions. Look for things on the menu like lighter options, or split your meal with someone else. All of these strategies will help you stay within your healthy eating goals.

Make sure to get time for physical activity while traveling. This requires taking the right gear, such as a good pair of walking or jogging shoes and work out clothes. Make sure to pack items such as cold water and healthy snacks for refueling. Take a backpack containing these and your diabetic supplies if you plan on being away from where you are staying for long length of time.

Other things to consider (but often forgotten) are the location of the nearest hospital, the recommended vaccinations to get if you are traveling out of the region or country and the dosing differences for your medications if you are planning international travel. Your doctor can help you figure these out if the need arises. Also if you are going somewhere that is either hotter or colder than you are used to, make sure you are able to keep your medications at the correct temperature. This time of year, there is a risk of freezing; medications such as insulin stop working if they get below certain temperatures.

A little planning can help keep your diabetes in control while you are traveling. Ask your health care providers for any other suggestions they might have to make managing your diabetes away from home that much easier.

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