

Traveling with Diabetes Supplies

Are there any special concerns regarding travel and diabetes supplies?

In general, diabetes supplies should be kept with you while traveling whether by air, land or sea. Bring extra medication (insulin and oral medications) and supplies (syringes, lancets and test strips) in case of an emergency. The American Diabetes Association recommends bringing double the amount of medicine and supplies needed for the time away.

Insulin is temperature sensitive and should not be allowed to freeze or become too hot. An insulated pack will keep insulin at an acceptable temperature.

What are the recommendations for air travel with diabetes supplies?

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recommends for air travel within the United States:

- Notify the airline screener that you have diabetes and will be carrying your diabetes supplies with you.
- You may request visual examination of your diabetes supplies at the start of the screening process to avoid x-ray inspection of your supplies.
- Pack medications and supplies in their own bag in your carry-on case. TSA recommends a one

quart-sized clear plastic re-sealable bag.

- Medications should have a label identifying them. A prescription label is not mandatory but is very helpful to expedite the screening process.
- The security screener will ask you to handle your medications and supplies during the inspection to prevent damage.
- If visual screening and clearance is not possible, the item(s) will need to be x-rayed.
- Tell your screener if you are wearing an insulin pump and that it cannot be removed. Insulin pumps can safely go through airport security according to the manufacturers.
- Supporting documents, such as prescriptions and letters of medical necessity from the doctor are not required by airline carriers but are helpful in the screening process.
- Let your screener know immediately if you are experiencing hypoglycemia and require medical assistance.
- If you have any questions regarding travelling with medications or supplies, you should call your airline at least one day in advance of your flight.

What diabetes products are allowed to be carried onto the plane once screened?

- Insulin vials and dispensing devices in original boxes with a professional, pharmaceutical pre-printed label that clearly identifies the medication. The name on the prescription should match that on your ticket.
- Other liquid medications (such as Byetta, Symlin or glucagon emergency kit) with a professional, pharmaceutical pre-printed label that clearly identifies the medication. The name on the prescription should match that on your ticket.
- Insulin pumps and supplies need to be accompanied by clearly labeled and identified insulin.
- Unlimited number of unused syringes accompanied by insulin or other injectible medication.
- Blood glucose meter, lancets, test strips, continuous blood glucose monitor and related supplies, alcohol swabs, meter-testing solutions.
- Urine ketone test strips.
- Supplies to treat hypoglycemia, such as gels and liquids (less than 3 ounces each).

What if I am traveling outside the United States?

Additional restrictions may be in effect for non-domestic air flights. Call the airline you will be flying at least one day in advance to determine if they have additional requirements for traveling with diabetes medications and supplies.

Be aware that insulin is available in different concentrations outside of the

US. In the US, most insulin is U-100 concentration. If you must use an insulin with a different concentration, ask the pharmacist to assist you in converting your doses and make sure you use the corresponding syringe (i.e. U-40 insulin requires U-40 syringe).

In most countries outside of the United States, glucose is measured in millimoles/liter (mmol/lit). Most glucometers can be programmed to display test results in milligrams/deciliter (mg/dl) or millimoles/liter. If you need to convert from mmol/lit to mg/dl, multiply the test results by 18. For example, **6.7 mmol/lit X 18 = 121 mg/dl**.

Are there additional recommendations for travelling with diabetes?

- Discuss changes in medication timing with your physician before your trip if you will be crossing time zones.
- Wear medical identification.
- Carry contact information for your health care provider.
- Carry a list of all your medications (name, dose, when to take). If using an insulin pump, have a record of your basal rates and bolus calculation settings.

Sources:

American Diabetes Association @ www.diabetes.org

Transportation Security Administration @ TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov