

Strong on Insulin - Making Strides

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

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It has been a long year. I hope that you and yours have survived the year of Covid without too many challenges. It is so nice to see loosened restrictions and to see so many people resuming the activities they did before the pandemic. Many people are even returning to travel both domestically and internationally.

The CDC has provided guidelines for both international and domestic travel. If you are fully vaccinated, you can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing.

- However, if you are taking medications that weakens your immune system, you may not be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. Talk to your health care provide. It is possible that you should continue to follow all the precautions.
- If you haven't been vaccinated yet, please reconsider your reasons for declining the vaccine. It is important that you continue to wear a mask, maintain social distance of six feet from people who do not live with you, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces and wash your hands frequently.

*(accessed 7/21/2021 ; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>).

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Domestic Travel Recommendations

	Fully Vaccinated	Not Vaccinated
Get tested 1 to 3 days before departure		✓
Get tested 5 days after travel. Self-quarantine for 10 days if you do not get tested		✓
Self-monitor for symptoms	✓	✓
Wear a mask and take other precautions while travelling	✓	✓

International Travel Recommendations

	Fully Vaccinated	Not Vaccinated
Get tested 1 to 3 days before departure		✓
Mandatory test required before flying back to US	✓	✓
Get tested 3- 5 days after travel.	✓	✓
Self-quarantine for 7 days with a test and 10 days if you do not get tested		✓
Self-monitor for symptoms	✓	✓
Wear a mask and take other precautions while travelling	✓	✓

Where ever you travel, plan ahead and have adequate supplies:

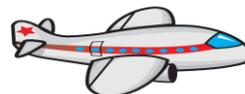
- Before traveling, pack sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (in case you are unable to wash your hands at your destination).
- Bring your mask to wear at all times — especially while riding on a train or bus, waiting at a rest stop, or riding in a car with people outside your household.
- Bring extra masks in case your mask gets wet or dirty and a plastic bag that can be sealed to store wet or dirty masks.

Avoid touching surfaces.

- As much as possible, limit touching frequently touched surfaces such as kiosks, digital interfaces such as touchscreens and fingerprint scanners, ticket machines, turnstiles, handrails, restroom surfaces, elevator buttons, and benches.
- If you must touch these surfaces, as soon as you can, wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or properly apply alcohol-based sanitizer containing 60% alcohol, by rubbing the gel all over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.
- Use touchless payment and no-touch trash cans and doors when available. Exchange cash or credit cards by placing them in a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand, if possible.

Do not eat or drink on public transit.

- Refrain from eating or drinking on public transit to ensure mask use at all times. Plan to eat and drink outside of the vehicle when you are not near other people.
- If you would like to eat or drink after exiting the public transportation, be sure to find a space at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) away from other people
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before eating or drinking and before removing your mask or touching your face.



**TRAVELING NOTES
IF USING INSULIN**

Traveling with diabetes requires extra planning before you even leave home. Certain precautions should be taken to assure a safe and healthy trip. In addition, changing meal times, activity levels and especially changing time zones can upset your diabetes control. You need to know how to anticipate the impact and make changes.



A. What items should be brought with me when traveling?

In addition to your personal items and clothes, you'll need to pack a "survival kit". This kit should be carried with you – not checked in a luggage compartment. Split the items up – give some of the items to a traveling companion.

If you wear a pump, consider contacting the pump company for a loaner pump. They may allow you to borrow a pump for the duration of your trip if you are going out of the country. Be sure to place a copy of your current pump settings with the loaner pump. *Many people also take a photo of the settings with their smart phone.*

The items that are starred should be included in a mini kit that you should always have available.

REMEMBER to pack twice as many supplies as you think you may need.

1. Bring your insulin

- 2 bottles/ insulin pens of long acting* and short-acting insulin* with syringes or pen needles along with an updated schedule of your insulin prescription
- If you are an insulin pumper, you will also need to bring extra insulin pump supplies*
 - a. fresh spare batteries
 - b. insulin vial
 - c. pump reservoir(PDM if using the Omnipod)

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- d. spare catheter and tubing
 - e. tape or surgical dressing
 - f. pump manufacturer phone number
 - g. an updated insulin schedule for multiple dose therapy, copy of the protocol for troubleshooting unexplained highs and your insulin schedule for sick days
 - h. pump manual
2. **Glucose monitoring equipment*** If you use a continuous glucose system, bring a spare meter with strips. Don't forget to bring extra batteries!
 3. **Bring testing equipment to measure for ketones** (Ketostix or Precision Extra blood ketone strips)
 4. **Glucagon Emergency Kit***
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5. **Non-perishable snacks***
 6. **Quick-acting food ***– glucose tablets, sugar cubes, lifesavers; powdered “Sports Drink –great for sick days”;
 7. **Dry soup mixes or bouillon cubes.**
 8. **A letter stating you have diabetes.** It should specify your need for continuous insulin pump therapy and/or daily injections, noting that you must carry a supply of medication and syringes; and specify that you may need to have foods and medications to treat/prevent hypoglycemia.
 9. **Spare prescriptions** for syringes, insulin with dosing instructions, glucose testing supplies.
 10. **First-aid medication and supplies:**
 - Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate, Imodium
 - Betadine solution, betadine ointment
 - Sunscreen,
 - Insect repellent
 - Antifungal ointment to treat athlete's foot
 - Moleskin, Band-Aids, and roll gauze
 11. **Consider prescription medication to treat excessive vomiting and diarrhea**
 12. **Medical Identification** – bracelet or necklace (it should give medical diagnosis and list of medications)



B. What precautions are necessary ?

1. If you have a pump or a continuous glucose sensor, consider informing airport security.
2. **Keep insulin at a temperature range of 40 to 86 degrees.**
 - Do not pack insulin with your checked luggage. Airline storage compartments often get too cold. If insulin freezes or gets too cold, it will lose effectiveness (it will not change its appearance).
 - Do not store insulin in a car or trunk unless it is stored in an insulated container. If it gets too hot, it will lose effectiveness (it will not change its appearance).
 - If the weather is extreme, consider putting your extra insulin in a wide mouth thermos or Frio Insulated cooling pak.
 - Also consider putting your pump or current insulin pens in an insulated bag if you are going to be in extreme heat.
 - *FRIO Pump Wallet is a good choice. It is available at Amazon.com*
3. **Consider requesting special meals when plane traveling.** Airlines provide a variety of meals that can be substituted for their standard offerings. These include cold salads, sandwiches, and kosher packs, as well as low calorie, diabetic and low salt meals.
4. **Decrease your risks while flying.**
 - If you are flying for more than 3 to 6 hours, there is a chance that your legs may swell. Blood clots can sometimes form in your legs during air travel because you are immobile for long periods of time often sitting in cramped spaces with little leg room
 - Get up and walk around for a few minutes every 1-2 hours.
 - Consider wearing compression socks while flying (15-20 mm/hg).
 - Avoid crossing your legs.
 - Limit the storage under the seat so you have room to stretch your legs.

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5. **Bring non-perishable snacks.**

- Even the best of plans fail. Therefore, you should always have a ready source of food available.

6. **You might need to avoid drinking the**

water. In some countries the sanitation facilities are not the best and the water may be contaminated. Check before you go!!!

- Avoid iced drinks
- Avoid all but bottled water. You might consider asking for carbonated water. This assures that the "bottled water" didn't come from a local source.
- Avoid fresh fruits, salads and fresh vegetables (these are washed in the water)



7. **Learn how to obtain medical assistance in an emergency.**

a. **Review the guidelines for treating "sick days"**

- Consider bringing powdered Gatorade to replace both salts and sugar if you cannot eat normally.
- If you cannot eat or drink and you are experiencing a lowering blood sugar ---- consider taking 15 units of glucagon every 1 hour until your blood sugar stabilizes.

b. **Learn how to contact a health professional**

- Major hotels in every country have access to English speaking doctors.
- Many credit cards have services that will provide you with the name of English speaking doctors.
- Call the U.S. Embassy or the Consulate for additional listings.

c. **Learn enough of the language to request help.**

d. **If you are traveling outside the country, call the pump company before you leave and request a list of foreign distributors in case you need emergency replacements.**

8. **Alert traveling companions that you have diabetes.**

- Inform them of the possibility of a low blood sugar or pump problems.

- Teach them the signs and symptoms of low blood sugar and give them specific instructions for correcting a low if you are unable to do it yourself.
- Teach them how and when to administer glucagon.
- Teach your traveling companions how to check your blood sugar (or how to use your CGM system)
- If you use a pump, teach them how to disconnect your pump. Also, consider teaching them how to operate the basic pump functions.

C. Should the Insulin Dosage be Changed While Vacationing?



It's hard to predict how each individual may respond.

- Increased activity associated with sightseeing, etc. may lower your blood sugar while increased number of restaurant meals or the stress of traveling may increase your blood sugar.
- The best way to decide if you need a change while vacationing is to check your blood sugar more frequently and base your decisions on your results.

If the Blood sugar is consistently out of range, then consider changing the timing or the dose of your insulin.

- When numbers are running high, go through the same management steps you would at home, including testing for ketones, adjusting insulin, and monitoring your blood sugar a little more closely to see if you can trace it to a particular food, event or activity.
- You may feel comfortable making the judgment call on how to proceed, but don't hesitate to contact your care team from your hotel room to troubleshoot.
- Your doctor or diabetes educator can help walk you through some steps that perhaps you haven't thought to take or can work with you to figure out an appropriate insulin adjustment.