

Travel advice for young people with diabetes

Information for patients, parents and guardians

If you have diabetes, you will need to make sure you can continue to manage your insulin while you are travelling or on holiday. We hope this list will help you get ready for your trip.

1. Keep your personal ID and a letter confirming that you have diabetes with you. Depending on your age, you may find it helps to have a photographic ID card. You can order one from Diabetes UK by telephoning 0845 120 2960.
2. Make sure that at least one person you are travelling with knows that you have diabetes and knows how to treat hypoglycaemia.
3. Carry two complete insulin kits in two separate pieces of hand luggage (double the amount of supplies). In case of unforeseen circumstances, such as loss or breakages, take twice the amount of supplies that you will actually need for the whole trip.
4. Carry all insulin in your hand luggage, as it will freeze in the aircraft hold and no longer be usable.
5. Always carry extra supplies of quick acting sugar and starchy carbohydrates in case of delays (not liquids).
6. Do not ask for a diabetic meal on a flight. Instead, make sure that you have the same meal as everyone else (Diabetic flight meals often contain too little carbohydrate).
7. Hot climates can affect how quickly your insulin works, so you need to be aware of possible hypos. Drink plenty of water so that you don't get dehydrated.
8. Keep your insulin and test strips cool. Insulin goes off if it is frozen or kept above 30°C, so you should always use a FRIIO pack if the temperature is outside of these parameters. You can get FRIIO packs from www.friiouk.com or by searching FRIIO pack on online shops such as Amazon. If you are going to a cold climate, make sure your insulin does not freeze.
9. Make sure you always have travel insurance which covers pre-existing illnesses, including diabetes.
10. Talk to the diabetes team about ways of managing your insulin dosage across different time zones.

11. Make sure you have all settings and ratios documented on paper with you in case your equipment breaks down (including carbohydrate ratios from expert meters and pump settings).
12. All MDI equipment, such as expert meters, can go through the x-ray machines at airports. Insulin pumps must not go through x-ray machines (if you are a pump patient, please see our separate advice letter about x-ray machines).
13. If you are on a pump, make sure that you have a complete MDI kit with you including spare insulin pen.
14. If you are unwell at any point during your holiday, follow the normal sick day rules as you would do at home still be hungry or thirsty.

Contact us

Normal emergency contact numbers for the paediatric diabetes team can still be used from anywhere and we can still phone you back even if you are abroad.

Take time zones into account and phone the correct number according to UK time.
(8am to 10pm UK time: 07699 788 820 or 10pm to 8am UK time: 023 8120 4628)

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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