



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

Travel and Diabetes

There is no reason why people with diabetes cannot enjoy the experience of travel. People with diabetes need not fear journeys or holidays at home or abroad even if they are on insulin. Planning your journey or holiday before you go helps you to enjoy yourself and to avoid problems with your diabetes while you are away.

What to do before you go?

See your family doctor if you have concerns about your current health or ability to travel. They will be able to advise you on any vaccinations needed. Vaccinations are best given well in advance of travel as they may upset your diabetes for a short time.

If travelling within the EU, obtain the medical certificate E111 from the post office, DSS office or your GP surgery. This gives you health cover in these countries. This scheme does not cover countries outside the EU so ensure that you have adequate travel insurance. Remember to inform your Travel Company and insurer that you have diabetes.

If you are travelling across time zones, ask your diabetes team for advice on timings and insulin adjustments. Check that your hotel has facilities for storage of insulin.

What things to take?

Ensure that you have some form of diabetes identification card or jewellery, which states that you have diabetes. You can obtain ID cards and leaflets written in the language of the country you are travelling to from the Diabetes UK care line. This will be helpful at Customs and also if you do have an illness whilst away.

Take twice as much insulin, tablets or equipment as you would normally use and carry it in your hand luggage. Do not put it in the hold where it could freeze. If travelling with someone split the supplies and give some to them to carry in case of loss of luggage or just split them between two of your own bags. Consider buying a cool bag to keep your insulin at a stable temperature, especially if you are going to a hot country.

Take a good supply of your favourite snacks, drinks and sweeteners in case of delays and enough dextrose or Lucozade to treat unexpected low blood sugars.

Take a list of all the useful contact numbers you might need whilst away.

Possible problems whilst travelling?

Blood sugars can go up and down more than usual on any long journey so make sure that you test regularly and keep hypo treatments close at hand. Generally, airline meals are small and you may need to take your own extra sandwich.

Whilst away?

Insulin often works more quickly in hot weather, so test regularly and be prepared to reduce your dose if necessary. Protect your feet with comfortable well fitting shoes and regular checking. Never go barefoot on the beach. If you do become ill on holiday, follow the guidelines for illness and diabetes, increase your testing and never stop your diabetic medication. Remember that you may be very active on holiday, this combined with change of routine, different foods, and the heat can cause blood sugars to go up and down.

Seeking advice and what care to expect

Your medical team or your specialist diabetes team should be able to give all the advice you need about travel. Be sure to have thought through any concerns you have or any difficulties you might predict, such as with long flights across time zones. If you have specific medical problems, ask your medical team to supply you with a letter detailing your important medical history. You can give this to other doctors if needed.