

TRAVELLING WITH DIABETES

For the traveling diabetic, overnight stays and short trips should not cause any real anxieties, other than if you are newly diagnosed or the diabetic is a young child. For adults, short trips are easy enough. You will need to take all your normal stuff with you, and might need to remember to take your long-acting insulin with you as well.



1. **Check your supplies** before you go – do you have enough blood test sensors to last you? Enough insulin and a hypo treatment (just in case). Longer trips and overseas travel need a bit more forethought and planning. **Two weeks' before you go** check your supplies and get any extras you may need from your GP.
2. **Keep all your diabetes equipment with you** – the last thing you need is it being part of any lost luggage. If you are travelling with someone else, ask them to carry a small bag of basic kit in case you lose yours.
3. **Clearing security.** Keep all your diabetes kit and medication in one place that you can easily access and show to anyone who may need to see it at customs. As diabetes is now quite common, you should not have real issues with this in the UK, US and many other countries.
4. **Hypo treatments:** if they are liquid (drinks gels and syrups) you will need to declare when passing through security at international departure points. Carry dry alternatives if possible when travelling (e.g. Glucotabs).

Keeping insulin cool: Each bottle or box of insulin cartridges has an information sheet in it. You can also check with your diabetes nurse and GP, but in the main if you use some common sense and keep your insulin away from extremes of temperature, you should be OK. It is not necessary to keep insulin cool if you are just taking a flight. When it's not in use (unopened and not in an insulin pen), it should be kept in a fridge. If it's in use – an open bottle of insulin or a cartridge already loaded into a pen, the insulin should be fine at room temperature for a few weeks. If you think it necessary, there are specialist bags and carry cases that keep insulin cool and there are even mini-fridges that you can plug into the car to keep insulin cool if you are traveling in very hot countries.

Some tips for traveling overseas:

- Download the free Diabetes and Travelling Guide from Diabetes UK. <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/travel>
- Get the address of the British Consulate in the country you are visiting and have that handy in case you need advice from people who speak your language and know the local culture.
- If you're traveling with people whom you do not know, it is wise to tell them you have diabetes in case you are taken ill, so they can help you.
- Keep a hypo treatment handy at all times – new cultures and new foods may well lead to high sugars, though. Keep testing to stay safe and enjoy yourself!

A DIABETIC TRAVELLER'S CHECK LIST

Anyone with diabetes traveling overseas should have a note with them from their doctor saying that they have diabetes and are on medication. A pump user may need an additional letter from their hospital or clinic saying they are diabetic and on a pump.

If flying, DON'T FORGET that insulin cannot go in the hold as it may freeze which can deactivate it. It's best to carry all your medication and diabetes management equipment with you in your hand luggage where you can keep an eye on it. **People with Type 2 diabetes:** If you have a blood test machine you may wish to take it with you, if you do not carry it about with you on a daily basis, as well as your medications.

For insulin injectors

- Blood test machine
- Lancing device
- Blood test sensors
- Insulin cartridges
- Insulin pens (long-acting and short-acting)
- Needles
- Hypo treatment

For insulin pump users

- Reservoirs
- Infusion sets
- Infusion set inserter
- Bottles insulin
- Batteries for pump
- Blood test machine
- Lancing device
- Blood test sensors
- Skin Tac (or similar) possibly Opsite Flexifit (or similar) for extra adhesion
- Charger (if required)
- Pump wear (waist bands, etc, for all your holiday clothing needs)

SPARES: You may want to take spare items to take on trips, such as:

- Spare blood test machine
- Spare sensors (and sensor charger and inserter if required)
- Spare insulin & insulin pen (including if you are on an insulin pen, just in case)
- Spare batteries
- Spare needles
- Spare hypo treatment
- Spare food that you are familiar with (check you're allowed to take it to the country you're traveling to as there are restrictions).