

## Travel Tips

Whether you're planning short day trips or a voyage of several weeks, thinking ahead will alleviate many problems, not to mention a lot of stress. Although diabetes requires extra work, you will find that virtually any trip or event you have planned is do-able. So read on and prepare to have a fabulous family vacation.

### **Put together a support team**

Discuss vacation plans with your doctors and other diabetes care providers to work out a tailored plan. As you probably know, any change in activity can affect blood sugar levels. For big trips, added excitement may cause lows, so you may want to consult your doctor for help with changing insulin dosage at such times. Also, ask your doctor for a letter explaining your medical condition and treatment needs, and get a prescription for insulin in case of an emergency.

Make any special accommodations for your child with diabetes well in advance of camp trips and other events. Speak to camp counselors, coaches, relatives, friends, etc. ahead of time to be sure you and/or your child will have enough support wherever you go. If you're not comfortable with the level of support, change your plans.

Pack extra supplies of everything you use to treat diabetes, and pack them in more than one bag, including a carry-on or purse. Make sure you wear your medical ID bracelet, or other medical identification, and let friends or family members know your itinerary.

Finally, you may also want to make reservations at restaurants to avoid long waits, and ask if they can provide you with nutritional information on their menu items.

### **Check blood sugar levels more often**

In general, people with type 1 diabetes should check blood sugars at least six times a day as part of their regular routine, and more whenever their schedule changes. Heat and excitement are two factors that can significantly affect blood sugar levels. The more often you check blood sugars, the more easily you'll be able to anticipate and avoid problems.

The insulin pump is becoming more and more popular, as it provides quite a bit of flexibility in your routine while also eliminating the need for insulin injections. Kids are becoming "pumpers" at very young ages and immediately after diagnosis as the technology improves and word spreads. If you have a child with diabetes, ask your doctor if the pump is right for him or her and, if possible, speak to other parents about their experiences with their children or teens on the pump.

### **Beat the heat**

People with diabetes may experience more low blood sugars in the heat, so take extra precautions. Dehydration can be a serious problem, whether or not you have diabetes, so make sure you carry water with you at all times, even when going to the beach or pool for the day. Most experts recommend drinking at least eight 8-oz. glasses of water a day in order to avoid problems, and even more if you're going to be very active.

Keep meters, test strips, and insulin out of direct sunlight and use insulated containers or ice packs, but be sure insulin doesn't freeze either.

**Special considerations for amusement parks**

If you are taking a child with diabetes to a major amusement park like [Disney World](#)/Land, the first thing you should do when you arrive is go to the guest relations office. Explain to the staff that your child has diabetes and must eat, check blood sugars, and/or take shots at specific times. Some of them will give you a pass that will get your family in the handicapped line for most rides, which will drastically cut the amount of time you will have to wait in lines. Bring a backpack with snacks, juices, water, and all your diabetes supplies. You may also want to pack meters and insulin pumps in waterproof bags so they don't get wet on water rides. If your child is relatively young, you can also rent a stroller for the day and stash supplies in there—and when she gets tired; she can rest in it, too.

Many parents also suggest making reservations for sit-down meals at amusement park restaurants before leaving for your trip.

## Tips for Flying with Diabetes Supplies

If you are traveling by air, be sure you have the latest information about flying with diabetes supplies. The information below is an excerpt from the guidelines for travelers with diabetes provided by the [Transportation Security Administration](#) of the Department of Homeland Security. Please note that JDRF is not responsible for the accuracy of this information. You may want to print this page to take with you to the airport, as well as call your airline for additional information. Also, it is helpful to have your doctor provide you with a letter for you to use when traveling.

### Persons with Diabetes

- Notify the screener that you have diabetes and are carrying your supplies with you. The following diabetes-related supplies and equipment are allowed through the checkpoint once they have been screened:
  - insulin and insulin loaded dispensing products (vials or box of individual vials, jet injectors, pens, infusers, and preloaded syringes);
  - unlimited number of unused syringes when accompanied by insulin or other injectable medication;
  - lancets, blood glucose meters, blood glucose meter test strips, alcohol swabs, meter-testing solutions;
  - insulin pump and insulin pump supplies (cleaning agents, batteries, plastic tubing, infusion kit, catheter, and needle);
  - Glucagon emergency kit;
  - Urine ketone test strips;
  - Unlimited number of used syringes when transported in Sharps disposal container or other similar hard-surface container.
  - Sharps disposal containers or similar hard-surface disposal container for storing used syringes and test strips.
- Provide the screener with a letter from your doctor.
- Insulin in any form or dispenser must be clearly identified.
- If you are concerned or uncomfortable about going through the walk-through metal detector with your insulin pump, notify the screener that you are wearing an insulin pump and would like a full-body pat-down and a visual inspection of your pump instead.
- Advise the screener that the insulin pump cannot be removed because it is inserted with a catheter (needle) under the skin.
- Insulin pumps and supplies must be accompanied by insulin.
- Advise screeners if you are experiencing low blood sugar and are in need of medical assistance.
- You have the option of requesting a visual inspection of your insulin and diabetes associated supplies.

If you encounter problems with the screening process, ask to speak with the TSA security supervisor. You can report problems encountered while traveling by calling the TSA Consumer Response Center toll free at 1-866-289-9673.