



# Travelling with diabetes

streetwise

This information is intended for those with Type 1 Diabetes



## Get yourself sorted

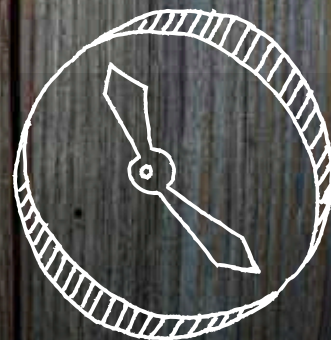
Planning ahead is a good idea if you are going away. Here are some things to consider.

### Time changes and travel meals

Talk to your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team about time zone changes to help alter the timing of your insulin doses. Consider whether you would like a 'diabetic meal' on the plane or boat. Pack extra snacks in your hand luggage in case of journey delays. Your dietitian can help you by telling you about the variety of foods in the country you are visiting.

### Sharps disposal

Remember to pack a safe-clip device or take a sharps box to help dispose of your needles safely. Please be considerate about lancet disposal too – other people do not want to be stabbed by your discarded sharps.



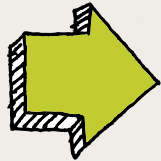
# plan ahead

# Ready to go?

## Make sure that you've covered everything on this holiday checklist:



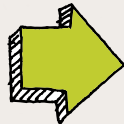
Do you need any vaccinations?  
Check with your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team



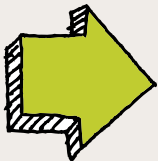
Do you have the correct container for storing your insulin and supplies both when travelling and whilst you are away?



Do you have some form of ID and a letter for customs?



Do you have adequate travel insurance?



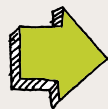
Do you and your travelling companions know what to do if you become unwell? This is especially important if you are travelling alone.



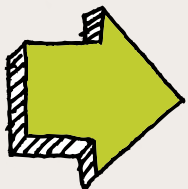
Have you packed travel sickness and/or anti-diarrhoea medication?



Have you packed the name, address, and phone number of the diabetic association in the country you are visiting?



Are your insulin and supplies in your hand luggage?



Have you packed extra food and snacks in case of flight or travel delays?



Have you written down the emergency contact numbers for yourself, and the name and address of the insulin supplier in the area you will be travelling?

The above is not an all-inclusive list.

**AND DON'T  
FORGET  
TO ENJOY YOUR  
HOLIDAY!**

# What to take



## INSULIN

- Your normal daily insulin plus spares
- A faster acting insulin and guidelines for its use from your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team
- The empty insulin packet and information sheet enclosed

## EQUIPMENT



- Needles, syringes, or pen device and pumps or spares
- Safe-clip/sharps bin from your clinic or GP
- Blood glucose meter and test strips
- Finger-pricking device and lancets
- Dextrose tablets and sugary drinks
- Record diary for results
- ID
- Ketone testing strips
- Extra food and snacks
- Take the hyperglycaemia and illness leaflet with you, but before you go, fill in the blanks with guidelines from your own clinic

## Insulin strength

Some countries use a different strength of insulin from ours. We use U-100 insulin in NZ but some countries still use U-40 insulin. It is a good idea to know what is available in the country you will be travelling in. Insulin brand names may vary from country to country; your insulin supplier will be able to advise you what your insulin is called in the country you are travelling to.



**BE CAREFUL!**  
DIFFERENT  
STRENGTHS OF  
INSULIN NEED  
DIFFERENT SYRINGES.  
CONTACT DIABETES  
UK FOR THE LATEST  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT THIS.

## Storing your insulin

Insulin can survive at room temperature for one month out of the fridge, but do put the opening date on all bottles you take with you and throw them away after one month. There are lots of different cool bags and containers in the shops – speak to your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team about the latest variety available. For holidays that last longer than one month, contact your clinic or about stocking up on your insulin stores whilst away. Alternatively, your insulin's manufacturer may be able to help. Always carry your diabetes supplies in your hand luggage.

Insulin may freeze if it is kept in the hold of a plane – do not use insulin that has been frozen. Consider splitting your supplies so that you carry half of your insulin and a friend or family member carries the rest.

# Think about...

## IDENTIFICATION

It is important that you wear or carry some form of *Medical alert* diabetes identification, in case you are ill abroad or if you are questioned when passing through Customs.

If you take insulin, it's advisable to declare your needles, syringes or pens and monitoring devices when passing through Security and Customs. It may be essential to take a letter from your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team that explains the type of treatment and devices that you use to monitor and control your diabetes.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is not unusual to pay more for travel insurance if you have diabetes. The policy must include preexisting medical conditions. Some recreational activities are not covered by your insurance company regardless of your diabetes, e.g., white water rafting, scuba diving, bungee jumping. Check with your insurance company and your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team before travelling. If you are going on a school activity holiday, ask if the school's insurance covers your diabetes too.



# hot

## Climate

- Think about sun safety
- Keep your insulin out of direct sunlight and in a cool place
- Insulin absorption may be faster in a warm climate, so monitor your control
- Drink plenty of sugarfree fluids
- Don't walk barefoot on hot sand or other surfaces
- Your blood testing strips may be affected in a warmer climate

# cold

- Take enough warm clothing – lots of thin layers are better than one thick layer
- Think about sun safety
- Insulin absorption may be slow, so monitor your control
- Do not allow your insulin to freeze, this will harm its action
- Your blood glucose testing strips may be affected in a cooler climate – talk about this with your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team

Blood glucose testing meters may be affected by hot and cold temperatures and altitude. Speak to your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team about the meter that you use.

## Contact Numbers

School Nurse:

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Diabetes Specialist or Local Team:

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### Kidshealth

<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz>

### Starship Transition

<https://www.starship.org.nz/patients-parents-and-visitors/youth-transition/diabetes-service>

### Youth Law Aotearoa

<http://www.youthlaw.co.nz>

**A series of leaflets is available that may be helpful for you:**

- Annual Review
- Body Piercing & Tattooing
- Emotional Well-being
- Exercise
- Insulin Pumps
- Looking After Type 1 Diabetes
- Sensible Drinking
- Sex and Beyond
- Top Tips for School
- Travelling

**Ask your diabetes team for the ones you want.**

Provided by Lilly as a support to medicine and patients with diabetes. This leaflet has been written by the RCN Children and Young People Diabetes Community (CYPDC). Lilly's involvement is limited to production costs and a review of the content for medical accuracy only.

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