

Traveling with a Chronic Condition



Trips need advance planning. This is so you can be comfortable and lower your risk that your health condition gets worse while you are away. Traveling can be a challenge, but it can be done. Pace yourself. Schedule even more rest than usual. And use this checklist to create a smart travel plan for a safe and enjoyable trip. Bon voyage!

Talk with your healthcare providers

- See your healthcare provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before your trip.
- Get written instructions for how to handle problems while you are away.
- If you are crossing time zones, ask how to take your medicines on schedule.
- Ask about your specific travel concerns. Take notes or ask a loved one to do it.
- Make sure you are up-to-date on all of your routine vaccines. You may need additional vaccines depending on where you are traveling. Ask your healthcare provider which vaccines you need.

Plan ahead

- Try to travel off-season, when there are fewer people. Fewer crowds can mean less stress for you.
- Think about what times of day you feel your best and when you need to take medicine.
- If you will be flying, call the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) helpline (855-787-2227) at least 72 hours before your flight. The TSA can give information on how to prepare for airport security screening with respect to a particular disability or medical condition.
- If your condition is unstable, bring a letter from your healthcare provider explaining the typical treatment plan. This will be helpful if you need to make a visit to an emergency room.

Prevent medicine mishaps

- Do you have enough medicine? Do you have extra for any unplanned delays? Take enough medicine for your length of stay and travel time, and at least 3 extra days of medicine for emergency delays.
- Pack your medicines in your carry-on luggage. Keep them in their original containers.
- Bring extra written prescriptions. This is in case of emergency or in case your medicines get lost.
- If you're traveling internationally, check with the embassy of the destination country about your medicines. Some medicines (like narcotics and psychotropic medicines) may not be allowed in the country.

Pack wisely

- Pack light and take only what is really needed.
- Carry your healthcare providers' contact information. Carry a list of medicines and a brief health history with you at all times. Give a copy to a person traveling with you.

Health insurance

- Check if your health insurance covers medical care during travel. If not, consider getting a travel insurance policy that covers healthcare and emergency evacuation.
- Bring a copy of your health insurance's out-of-area care policy and your health or travel insurance cards.
- Have a plan to get care during your travels, in case you need it.

Oxygen

- Get the prescription for your oxygen needs in writing.
- Make a plan for getting oxygen at your destination.
- Arrange for supplemental oxygen in advance with your airline. Ask about costs, paperwork, and layovers.

Steer clear of smokers

- Ask about the no-smoking policies where you are going.
- Let your travel companions and hosts know you can't be near anyone who smokes.

Prepare for an emergency

- Wear a medical alert bracelet.
- Pack a [travel health kit as advised by the CDC](#).
- Locate the hospital closest to where you are staying.
- Find out the emergency services phone number.

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