

TRAVELLING WITH DIABETES

Plan ahead

Plan a holiday you feel able to cope with.

Think about insulin and meal times when booking flights

Have all recommended vaccinations.

For European travel take E111 – available from post offices.

Ensure Insurance covers your diabetes.

Continue with your diet as at home. You may need to book a diabetic diet in advance at hotels. Watch foreign food for hidden sugar. If in doubt monitor regularly.

General points.

Travel with the following in your hand luggage.

- Sufficient medication for your holiday and a little extra to allow for delays and time changes.
- Sufficient monitoring equipment for your holiday.
- Food to treat a hypoglycaemic episode. Dextrose tablets & biscuits or bananas. Glucagon or hypostop should be carried if taking Insulin
- Doctors' letter or medic alerts identification to cover you at airports etc for syringes.
- Don't assume flights will be on time!

Hot weather

- Insulin absorbed more rapidly, monitor blood sugar regularly, you may need to decrease your Insulin.
- Remember if the nerve supply to your feet is poor, you will not feel the heat of the sand etc so always wear suitable footwear.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Watch for non-diet pop abroad.

Cold weather

- Insulin absorbed more slowly, as you warm up later in the day it may be suddenly absorbed. Monitor regularly.
- Shivering can lower blood sugars and Hypos in cold climates take longer to recover from.
- Watch for frostbite. Poor peripheral circulation makes this more likely and if the feeling to your feet is poor, you will not notice this happening.

Storing Insulin

- Insulin can be kept at British room temperature.
- If travelling in very hot or very cold climates, store Insulin in a cool bag or in the hotel fridge (Isobags are available from medical shop)
- Insulin should be kept out of direct sunlight.
- Very high or very low temperatures can damage Insulin
- Do not put Insulin in aeroplane holds.

Illness.

It is important that your travelling companions know what to do if you are unwell:

- Frequent monitoring.
- Plenty of fluids. Not sugary drinks.
- If you take Insulin & are unwell. Check your urine for Ketones. You get Ketones in your urine either because you haven't eaten for a while, or because your diabetes is poorly controlled and you need prompt medical attention for your diabetes.
- Do NOT stop taking medication or Insulin if you are unwell.
- If you are at all unsure about what to do seek medical advice.

Time Zones & Insulin.

If time zone change is < 4 hours make no changes to dosage.

Westwards

Long day, therefore you will in general need slightly more insulin to cover an extra meal.

Eastwards.

Shorter day therefore slightly less insulin will be needed to cover the shorter time period.

Either way you can expect your diabetes to be poorly controlled for 48hours. Monitor regularly & don't rely on the aeroplane to have food if you are a bit low. Carry your own.

If in any doubt discuss it with Sister beforehand.

IT IS IMPORTANT YOU HAVE A GOOD HOLIDAY AND ACCEPT THAT
YOUR BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL WILL NOT BE PERFECT WHILST YOU
ARE AWAY.

Useful addresses.

Medic Alert Foundation
12 Bridge Wharf
156 Caledonian Road
London N1 9UU
01171 833 3034
Diabetes UK Insurance services
For Travel Insurance
0990 001541

Medical Shop (For Insulin storage bags)
Freepost, Woodstock
Oxfordshire
OX20 1BR
01993 812021