

EATING RIGHT

Travel often means stepping away from your usual dietary routine but forward planning will help you take everything in your stride and enjoy everything on offer.

- ◆ Be prepared. It can be tricky staying on top of blood glucose levels when meal times are outside your control or your schedule involves significantly more or less exercise than usual, so keep your BGL meter handy for extra testing and, even if you're planning only a short outing, carry additional snacks and medication just in case.
- ◆ When flying, check in advance your airline's meal schedule and menus – while most offer diabetic options, these may not fit in with your food plan. You should carry your own supply of diabetes-friendly snacks, ensuring these include enough carbohydrates to tide you over in case of travel delays.
- ◆ If you're visiting a destination where the food is unfamiliar, seek guidance beforehand from a dietitian in the know on the carbohydrate content of local ingredients.
- ◆ Set an alarm reminding you when to eat – it's easy to forget snacks and mealtimes in the excitement of travelling.
- ◆ Be hygiene-conscious. Wash your hands regularly, particularly before eating and, tempting though it may be, avoid eating street food and off market stalls. Gastro upsets not only upset your diabetes but make regular food intake more difficult.
- ◆ Follow the health guidelines for your destination. Is it safe to drink the tap water? If not, you should be wary of eating salads, cut fruit and drinks served with ice. Sticking with bottled water and drinks makes good sense anywhere if you have a sensitive stomach.

NOTE: Take into account that long journeys mean you'll be inactive for significant periods of time. This can also create a higher BGL, so monitor levels. Also take into account any extra exercise undertaken, i.e. long strenuous hikes, and factor how this will affect your blood glucose levels. You may be tired or jetlagged, but try not to skip any of your planned meals or snacks.



KID'S ZONE

There are some special points to remember if you're travelling with a child who has diabetes.

- ◆ Ensure your child is up to date with immunisations – especially any required for your specific destination. Allow two months in case special immunisations are required.
- ◆ Make sure they wear a diabetes ID tag or bracelet – it is a must-have and any personal details on it should be current.
- ◆ While airlines do offer diabetic meals, they are often low in carbohydrates and kids may find them too boring and unappetising to eat. Instead, order a regular kids' meal – you can request extra carbs from the cabin crew but it's wise to take your own supply of diabetes-friendly snacks as well.
- ◆ Travelling can disrupt a child's body clock, but they should not be allowed to sleep more than an hour past their usual wake-up time. Extra blood glucose testing will help manage the impact of changed time zones but a child should not be given insulin while in bed or allowed to sleep between insulin and eating a meal.

You can also pack *Caring for Diabetes in Children and Adolescents* or bookmark it on your phone/iPad at www.kidsdiabetes.org.au.

TIP
Learn a few key phrases such as "I have diabetes" in case of an emergency.

Tengo la diabetes
- Spanish

J'ai le diabète
- French

Ho il diabete
- Italian



TRAVELLING & diabetes

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

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BE READY

Travel can land you in unpredictable situations, so plan ahead, expect the unexpected and you should be well-prepared for all eventualities

SICK DAY MANAGEMENT FOR INSULIN USERS

Pack a kit with these sick day essentials

- ◆ copy of sick day guidelines from your doctor
- ◆ spare short or rapid-acting insulin, plus insulin pen or syringes
- ◆ pre-packed sick-day food and drink
- ◆ Glucagon injection kit
- ◆ glucose tablets or gel
- ◆ ketone testing strips
- ◆ spare blood glucose meter and strips
- ◆ thermometer

TIP
Blood ketone measurement should be available as part of a comprehensive sick day management plan.

LOST SUPPLIES:

Your diabetes supplies should be carried in your hand luggage. Pack double the quantity you are likely to need and divide it between two separate bags to reduce your risk in the event of lost luggage. Should the worst happen and you're left high and dry, make sure you have a back-up plan and know where to access emergency supplies wherever you are travelling.

HEALTH CARE IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

Be aware that health and diabetes care overseas may not be the same as here, so you need to be prepared in case of problems. Seek guidance well before your departure date from your doctor, local diabetes organisation, DEFAT (the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) and your travel insurer about diabetes services at your destination.

DOCUMENTATION:

Carry with you:

- ◆ Several copies of a letter from your doctor or hospital outlining your medical conditions, your medications and any devices (such as insulin pens/syringes or pump as well as blood glucose meters and strips) used. This should make clear that you need to carry these with you at all times. If travelling to a non-English speaking country, consider having this letter translated into the local language, ensuring that your doctor signs it.
- ◆ Contact details for your doctor and your travel insurers for easy reference in case of emergency.

If you find yourself in difficulty, contact the Australian consulate in your country.



BE PREPARED

Make your travelling experience more enjoyable with a little careful planning.

✓ WHEN BOOKING YOUR TRIP

- ◆ Start looking into travel insurance options as soon as you've decided on your destination and take out cover at the same time you book your trip. When heading overseas check whether the country you're visiting has a reciprocal health-care arrangement with Australia and take your Medicare card. Call Medicare Australia for this information on 13 20 11, or visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

✓ ONE MONTH TO GO

- ◆ See your doctor at least one month before your journey, especially if you're travelling by air – you will need a letter for airport officials (and customs, if you're going overseas) explaining your condition and medication requirements and may also need a doctor's certificate as a condition of your insurance cover.
- ◆ Seek guidance on any adjustments to your insulin or medication necessary while travelling, and organise any vaccinations needed.

✓ TWO WEEKS TO GO

- ◆ Stock up on health supplies and medications. Ensure you have backup supplies and extra prescriptions for your insulin and medications.
- ◆ If you wear an insulin pump, be prepared in case it breaks down. Carry spare pens/needles, plus a supply of long-acting insulin and the dosage you'll need. Take contact details for your pump supplier and a record of your daily dosage.
- ◆ Invest in a spare blood glucose monitor and extra batteries.

✓ ONE WEEK TO GO

- ◆ Give a copy of your travel itinerary to your family. If going overseas, register with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade at www.orao.dfat.gov.au.
- ◆ Write a checklist of everything you need to take on your trip.

✓ ONE DAY BEFORE DEPARTURE

- ◆ Work through your checklist. Check and double-check your travel and health documentation.
- ◆ Pack your bags. Make sure to pack travel and health documentation, snacks, medical supplies and blood glucose monitor in your hand luggage.

✓ DAY OF DEPARTURE

- ◆ Finish those last-minute tasks and pack your remaining supplies.
- ◆ Test your blood glucose levels before leaving home.

PACK RIGHT

Stay healthy and hassle-free by travelling with everything you will need.

If you don't already have one, make sure you wear a diabetes ID necklace or bracelet at all times when travelling. Play safe by packing double the amount of medication and supplies you'll need so you're covered in the event of lost luggage, extra testing or unexpected travel delays.

Tick these items off as you go and calculate whether you have enough of each to last your entire trip.

<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contact numbers saved in your mobile/wallet	<input type="checkbox"/> ID bracelet or necklace
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharps disposal container	<input type="checkbox"/> Identification stating you have diabetes (NDSS card)
<input type="checkbox"/> Travel insurer's emergency contact number in wallet and phone	<input type="checkbox"/> GP/endocrinologist/diabetes educator's contact details
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood glucose meter and spare batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> List of medications
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood glucose and blood ketone test strips	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of prescriptions
<input type="checkbox"/> Spare blood glucose meter	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctors letter
	<input type="checkbox"/> All medications
	<input type="checkbox"/> Name and address of diabetes services available at your destination

If using insulin:

<input type="checkbox"/> Glucagon injection kit	<input type="checkbox"/> Insulin pens - as a backup in the event of pump failure
<input type="checkbox"/> Hypo kit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Carbohydrate snacks	<input type="checkbox"/> Insulin pump supplies (if you use a pump)
<input type="checkbox"/> Ketone test strips	
<input type="checkbox"/> Glucagon	<input type="checkbox"/> Cool pack for storage of insulin
<input type="checkbox"/> Syringes	
<input type="checkbox"/> Short and long acting insulin	

TIP: Pack your essential diabetes equipment between two separate hand luggage bags – that way, if one of them gets lost you will have a backup. Do not pack your supplies in with the luggage that will be placed in the cargo of the plane, as it could be exposed to extreme temperatures or get lost leaving you without any supplies. **NOTE:** Every airline has different cabin bag allowance, so check their guidelines in advance before you pack.



TAKING OFF

Air travel can affect blood glucose control in a number of ways, especially if you're flying long-haul. Making plans and provisions for the change in your routine will help guarantee a smooth flight.

There are several key factors liable to affect your blood glucose levels when flying:

- ◆ Time zone differences, particularly when these are several hours
- ◆ Long periods of inactivity
- ◆ Timing of meals, snacks and stop-overs
- ◆ Altitude, dehydration and stress

Your doctor or diabetes educator can help you work out an individualised plan based around your medical requirements and travel schedule. When flying, follow these basic guidelines:

- ◆ always keep your diabetes supplies handy in your cabin baggage
- ◆ carry out extra blood glucose tests
- ◆ drink plenty of sugar-free fluids and avoid alcohol
- ◆ boost your circulation and prevent swelling and blood clots by standing up and walking around as often as possible and performing regular leg and foot exercises
- ◆ be prepared for swings in your blood glucose levels, especially unexpected hypos
- ◆ stick to your planned routine, setting an alarm or asking to be awoken so there's no risk of sleeping when you should be eating or taking your medication
- ◆ carry plenty of carbohydrate snacks to deal with BGL dips or delays in meal service
- ◆ if you use insulin, remember to take your long-acting dose as planned and your short-acting when your meal arrives.
- ◆ Do not inject air into an insulin vial when drawing up your dose as air on the plane is pressurised
- ◆ Stay on track time-wise by keeping your watch set to the time at home and change it when you arrive at your destination.



Travel should be an opportunity for hassle-free fun and adventure and having diabetes need not change this – it is just a question of taking a little extra care when planning your trip.

Discussing your travel plans with your doctor and diabetes educator is as important as consulting your tour operator or travel agent - you can never be too well prepared!

But whether you're heading off overseas or travelling locally, going away for business or pleasure, using this handy pocket guide as a ready reference should help smooth the way as you plan and prepare for your trip and finally set off.