

Travel

Diabetes absolutely does not need to kill the travel bug! Many people with diabetes travel far and wide, in style and on a shoestring, in a hurry for constant business trips and on long extended holidays around the world!

There are some extra things you'll need to do, however, mainly in regards to keeping the security guys off your back for carrying 'sharp objects' and to make sure you always have the wonder drug insulin by your side as you travel.

Carry a letter from your doctor. Ask your doctor to write a letter stating your full name, address and date of birth, that you have diabetes and then listing the medications, insulin delivery devices (syringes, insulin pens or pumps) which you use and blood glucose testing equipment you use, and stating that you must be allowed to carry these with you at all times. Make several copies of this letter.

Customs or Security Gates. If questioned about syringes or other diabetes equipment which you are carrying, stay calm, simply state that you have diabetes and explain what the devices are. Show the person the letter from your doctor. The Federal Aviation Authority trains all security staff in what people with diabetes must be allowed to carry. There is no need to 'declare' your supplies on domestic or international flights as they are entirely permitted.

Take a spare prescription. Always take prescriptions for all medications which you need, and which you are carrying with you. This will both assist you to get more supplies if needed, and reassure security officers that the medications are your own.

Carry all your diabetes supplies in your hand luggage. It can be difficult, though not impossible, to obtain all your diabetes supplies away from home if they are lost. Best to keep them close to hand so you don't have to waste precious time traipsing around a new city.

Replacing lost supplies. If you do find yourself in this predicament, start with a major hospital's emergency room which should be able to supply enough to get you through. Alternatively, phone the diabetes organisation where you are and ask someone to explain how you obtain diabetes supplies in their state/country. If heading overseas, you can find out contact details for the local organisation in advance by visiting the International Diabetes Federation's website: < www.idf.org >

Wear ID. Make sure you have some form of identification which says that you have diabetes such as a Medicalert bracelet, on you, especially if travelling alone.

Pass on 'diabetic' meals on planes. These can be a little unpredictable. Some people even report that their 'diabetic' airplane meals have included not a scrap of carbohydrates. On a related note, for long hauls you can generally find out from the airline which meals will be served on flights - but not exactly what the meals will contain - which may be helpful in planning long trips.

Always pack hypo supplies - especially on long flights. Also, don't be afraid to ask the flight attendant for a lemonade or extra food if you need it to treat a hypo.

Get Travel Insurance! It may seem like just another wad of dollars which your travel agent is trying to extract from you but if only for your and your family's peace of mind it could be the best investment you ever make. There will most likely be an excess for your 'pre-existing condition' - \$100 extra is common.

There are hundreds more tips and tricks that you can learn from others with diabetes who have travelled extensively. The [Reality Check website](http://www.realitycheck.org.au) contains some stories of people's travels, as well as an easy discussion forum where you can ask more specific questions relating to your own travel plans.