



Travel and diabetes

Travel can, and should be, fun and having diabetes doesn't mean your travelling days are over. With good planning, there is no reason why your travels won't be safe, fun and hassle-free whether within Australia or overseas. It's important for everyone to have a good plan before going bush. For people with diabetes this is even more important. Things to consider may include departure time and health regulations associated with your means of travels e.g. train, bus or air.

Planning tips

- Take a letter from your doctor outlining your medical conditions, the medications you take and the devices you use.
- Take clearly written details of your next of kin or family member.
- Take your Medicare card and your National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) card.
- Estimate what medication, test strips, insulin and syringes you will need for the entire trip. It is best to pack more in case of loss or damage.
- If you are taking insulin or diabetes tablets, carry some form of quick acting carbohydrate, such as glucose tablets or jelly beans in case of a hypo. In addition have some biscuits, crackers or dried fruit in case of delayed or unsuitable meals.
- Carry your supplies with you in case your baggage gets lost.
- Train, bus and air travel require you to comply with their security regulations. Contact the travel company with whom you are travelling to find out what is required.
- If you are using an insulin pump, remember to take extra pump batteries, consumables, your manual and a list of your pump settings. It is wise to contact your pump manufacturer before you go to find out what resources are available at your travel destination.
- If possible, pack a spare meter. Remember, if you travel overseas glucose meters purchased in other countries may not register in mmol/L which is the Australian unit for measuring glucose. If you do need to buy a new meter, check that the displayed readings are in mmol/L NOT mg/dL.

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Monitoring and Insulin tips

- Insulin and blood glucose test strips are stable at room temperature under 30 degrees Celsius. They will be damaged by temperature extremes so must not be frozen or left in the sun or heat for any length of time. If you are likely to be in very hot or cold places, take a small insulated bag which you can buy from Diabetes NSW & ACT 1300 342 238.
- Take a small approved sharps container for your used lancets and syringes. You can then dispose of it when you come across a sharps disposal service.
- Accuracy of blood glucose results is also affected by temperature at the time of operation. As temperature ranges vary for conducting a test, consult your meter user manual for your meter's operational temperature range.

Travel tips

- Wear some form of medical identification that says you have diabetes.
- When travelling long distances by car, try to take regular meal breaks to check your blood glucose levels and do some type of physical activity.
- The excitement of the trip may affect your blood glucose levels so check your levels more often. If you're using insulin, always have a hypo pack with you and know how to adjust your dose. Discuss with your doctor or diabetes educator before you travel.
- Carry a small first aid kit with you in case of aches and pains, minor cuts and burns.
- Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes and remember to check your feet every day.



"Hands on Country"

This painting was created for Australian Diabetes Council by artist Chris Tobin, a Dharug man, and a traditional custodian in the Blue Mountains region. In the artist's words: "The central part of this painting represents the relationship of the clan – it's a unity of people looking out for each other while living independent lives."



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