

## Diabetes Guide to Summer/Winter and Travel

The JDRF have produced some guidance for managing type 1 diabetes in the summer time, which you may find useful [A Guide to Summer with Type 1 Diabetes - JDRF](#)

Below is some advice if you are travelling abroad:

### Before you Travel

- Visit GP to receive all necessary vaccinations
- Ensure your travel and health insurance covers people with diabetes
- Order double insulin and equipment from GP and pump supplier
- Check hotel/apartment has a fridge for storing insulin
- Obtain a letter from your consultant to inform airline that you need to carry insulin and needles on the aircraft.
- Check your travel times and speak to your diabetes team for advice about travel across time zones and how this may affect your insulin injection/administration times.

### What to Pack

- Double supplies of :-
  - Insulin (penfils and 10ml vials for pump users)
  - Any other medications you use
  - Glucagon (HypoKit™ – orange box)
  - Glucogel™
  - Hypo treatments
  - Lancets
  - Pen needles
  - Blood glucose test strips
  - Blood ketone test strips
  - For pump users – Reservoirs, cannulas, batteries, injection pens (short and long-acting insulin), spare overtapes.

- Sharps box
- Spare insulin pens and insulin cartridges
- Spare blood glucose and Ketone meters
- Spare lancet device
- Spare glucose sensors (eg libre/ Dexcom/ Guardian)
- ID necklace, bracelet or card
- Note of insulin type, manufacturer and concentration
- Management advice leaflets such as sick day rules and insulin pump failure.
- Copy of current insulin pump settings
- Thermometer
- Medication to treat a fever e.g. Paracetamol
- Medication to treat diarrhoea e.g. Immodium™ or Dioralyte™
- Contact telephone numbers for UK diabetes team.

## General Advice

Pack your insulin and equipment in hand luggage in two separate bags in case one is lost. Never pack insulin in your suitcase as it may freeze in the storage hold of the aeroplane.

When going through airport security alert airport staff if you are wearing an insulin pump or glucose sensor (you can request a hidden disability lanyard once at the airport).

Request a letter from your consultant confirming that you have diabetes and keep this with you when travelling.

Some medical equipment should not be passed through body scanners, magnetic fields and x-ray security machines – Please refer to the manufacturers advice for your particular equipment, before you travel. See links and phone numbers below:

Insulin pumps are designed to be used within a specific air pressure range and so may be affected if you are somewhere at high altitude such as skiing or walking in mountains - Please refer to the manufacturers advice for your particular equipment, before you travel. See links and phone numbers below:

[Travelling with type 1 diabetes - JDRF](#)

[Travelling with diabetes | Managing your diabetes | Diabetes UK](#)

Medtronic pumps and sensors: 01923 205167

Air Liquide (Tandem T-Slim pump): 0800 0121560

Dexcom Glucose sensors: 0800 0315761

Libre Flash glucose: 0800 1701177

Ypsomed (Omnipod pumps): 0800 0116132

Advanced Therapeutics UK Ltd (Dana pumps) 01926 833273

Keep spare insulin in a cool bag or Frio Bag™ (Friouk.com) during the journey and store unopened insulin in a fridge once at your destination. Do not let insulin freeze or expose it to temperatures above 25 °C. Remember to keep your pump cool in hot climates, or under clothing in cold climates.

Hot and cold temperatures can also affect your diabetes equipment, such as blood glucose monitors, so check the manufacturers guidelines for your equipment for temperature operating range.

Changes in air pressure when flying or at high altitude and changes in temperature can cause the formation of air bubbles in your insulin (pen and pump), so check for these before delivering your insulin doses.

Always carry some form of glucose and extra snacks in case you go hypo.

Pack a supply of suitable snacks and carry spare food for the journey in case of delays.

Ensure you drink plenty of fluids when in a hot climate – avoid tap water and ice.

Take an insulin pen and cartridges with you in case of problems with your pump.

## Time Zones

**If using injections:** If you are travelling across time zones, please speak to your diabetes team for advice about the timing of your insulin doses.

**If you using an insulin pump:** Remember to change the clock on your pump to the new time, once you arrive at your destination. Don't forget to change it back when you get home!

## Altering Insulin Doses

Blood glucose levels can be affected by many factors such as climate, food changes, alcohol, extra or unusual exercise/activity, excitement, travelling and illness. If you suffer persistent hypo or hyperglycaemia at certain times of the day, it is advisable to alter your insulin doses to correct these. Aim to keep your blood glucose levels between 4-7 mmol/l. If you are unsure how to do this, contact your UK diabetes team on 01743 450855 option 2.

## Drinking Alcohol

Alcohol can be dangerous, especially when you are taking insulin. Drinking sensibly in moderation should cause you no problems. In this country alcohol cannot be consumed or sold to people under the age of 18 years. Serious low blood sugars can occur both during and for several hours after drinking. Following some simple guidelines can prevent problems from happening. Alcohol especially spirits can cause severe hypoglycaemia, because it is broken down in the liver it can also prevent the body from releasing its emergency supply of sugar (in the liver). This can make hypoglycaemia much more severe, difficult to treat.

- Try not to drink too much.
- Always have something to eat before, during and after you have had a drink. Eat longer acting carbohydrates, like toast or chips on the way home. Don't give a correction dose or give insulin for any food you eat just before going to bed, if you have been drinking a significant amount of alcohol, **unless you have blood ketone levels of 0.6mmol/l or above.**
- If you use an insulin pump, you may need to use a temporary basal rate decrease or a higher temporary blood glucose target (may also be known as exercise setting/temp target or ease off) during the night after having several drinks.
- Some people say they go low between breakfast and lunch the next day, so may need to take smaller amounts of insulin with these meals.
- Remember to let your friends know you have diabetes and wear identification. Tell them what to do if you have a hypo.
- Ask someone to wake you up in time for breakfast the next morning, as you are more at risk of hypos after drinking alcohol.
- Remember to stay safe.

## **Contact details for more information**

### **Monday to Friday 9am-5pm**

Diabetes doctors can be reached via the paediatric secretaries on 01952 641222, ext. 5980 or 5981

Diabetes nurses on 01743 450855 option 2

Diabetes Dietician on 01952 641222 extension 4874

### **In an emergency/out of hours**

In an emergency during working hours when you cannot reach one of the team above or for out of hours support i.e. after 5pm or at weekends:

All patients requiring advice should contact the Princess Royal Hospital switchboard on 01952 641222 and ask to speak to the paediatric registrar for diabetes advice.