

Traveling After Transplant

Transplant recipients have a weakened immune system, which puts them at higher risk for infections when traveling. Some locations may require medications or vaccinations before you can visit.

It is important that you plan ahead if looking to travel outside of the United States/Canada. Before booking a trip, check to see if your destination(s) require medications or vaccinations. Once you know the requirements, you should discuss them with the Transplant Pharmacist. Some vaccines are made from live viruses and are not recommended for transplant recipients, and some required medications could interact with your anti-rejection medications.

MEDICATIONS

- Keep ALL medications in their original bottles with the pharmacy label secure.
- Be prepared with a supply of medications for at least twice as long as you plan on being away (in case your trip lasts longer than originally planned).
 - Obtaining additional supplies may be difficult to obtain when away from your local retail/mail order pharmacy.
- Pack a supply of any over-the-counter medications you might need, including:
 - Pain medication (Tylenol®)
 - Anti-allergy
 - First aid kit
 - Sunscreen
 - Insect repellent
- Timing of medications may need to be adjusted while you are traveling if you travel to different time zones.
 - If you can continue to take your medications at your normal times, do so.
 - If the time zone varies by more than three hours, discuss how to adjust with your Transplant Coordinator.
- KEEP your medications with YOU when traveling.
 - If flying, DO NOT put your medication in your checked baggage, as there is no guarantee that it will make it to your destination when you do.
 - Make sure your carry-on bag can hold your medication/supplies.
If asked to check at the gate, explain that your transplant medications are inside and that you need to keep them with you.

PAPERS TO KEEP WITH YOU

- Keep a medication list, including doses and timing, with you always.
- A document with your transplant center contact information
- Research the address and telephone number of the nearest transplant center to your destination.

KEEPING HEALTHY

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer:
 - Before and after preparing foods/drinks, eating, using the restroom, and touching animals
 - When hands are visibly dirty
- Wear a face mask on airplanes when not eating/drinking.
- Social distance by at least 6 feet when you can.

MOVEMENT

- No matter which form of transportation you might be using, it is important to get up and stretch for at least 10 minutes every 1-2 hours. This will help to prevent blood clots from developing in your legs.
- While sitting, try moving your feet back and forth to help with circulation.



 WVU Medicine

TRANSPLANT ALLIANCE

Transplant Office:
304-974-3004

Toll Free:
844-988-7267

Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
8 am – 4 pm

After hours, your call will be forwarded to the call center.

Please ask for the Transplant Coordinator on-call to be paged.

DIET

- Make sure you stay well hydrated while traveling. Water is the best.
- Have snacks with you if you need to take your medications with food.
- Try to follow your prescribed diet.
- Food and water safety outside of the U.S. and Canada:
 - Stomach illness can occur from eating or drinking food that is not clean.
 - Transplant recipients have an increased risk from bacteria and/or parasites.
 - To protect yourself:
 - Drink bottled or boiled water.
 - Do not drink water from a faucet.
 - Avoid ice unless it is made from boiled, bottled, or purified water. Freezing does not kill the germs that cause diarrhea.
 - Avoid rinsing your toothbrush with tap water.
 - Avoid uncooked or partially cooked food.
 - Avoid food from street vendors or market stalls.
 - Immediately eat cooked food; do not allow it to sit.
 - Eat fresh fruits that can be peeled, as they are considered safe. Raw fruits and vegetables (like salads) will put you at risk. Avoid garnishes on foods, uncooked vegetables, fruits, or herbs.
 - Avoid unpasteurized milk products, including soft cheeses, which may carry bacteria such as *Listeria* and *Brucella*.
 - Avoid ice cream or other frozen products that may have been made or stored in a contaminated container.
 - Fluid replacement is essential. Fluids can be replaced with clean water or oral rehydration solution (Pedialyte®).
 - If diarrhea continues, see a doctor to avoid severe dehydration.

INSURANCE

- Check with your insurance provider regarding to determine what coverage you will have at your destination.
- Consider obtaining evacuation insurance for transport to a major medical center in case you become severely ill.

ACTIVITIES

- Swimming
 - Chlorinated pools and oceans are acceptable.
 - Avoid locations that do not have a current (standing water), such as small lakes, ponds, and inlets that have green moss around the edges of the water.
 - Avoid hot tubs/Jacuzzis or steam rooms.
- Sun Exposure
 - Transplant medications increase sensitivity to sun exposure and increase chances of skin cancer.
 - Wear hats that cover your ears and long sleeve t-shirts that provide UV protection. Carry an umbrella to provide shade. The sun is the strongest between 10 am and 4 pm. Plan for indoor activities during these hours, and wear protection when outside.
 - Use SPF 50 sunscreen lotion for face and body and sunscreen lip balm. Reapply every 2 hours or more frequently if you are in the water or sweating it off.

WHEN YOU RETURN FROM YOUR TRIP

- Give yourself a couple of days to get back into your normal routine before having a blood sample obtained.

PLANNING IS EVERYTHING

For more information, visit:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list

World Health Organization (WHO) Travel Advice
www.who.int/travel-advice