

Smooth Travels

Pack your bags with care the next time you head off to the airport. Travel restrictions on liquids, put in place this past summer, mean that people with diabetes may need to take extra steps to prepare for airplane travel.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) says that liquid prescriptions may be carried on board, as long as the name on the prescription matches that on the passenger's ticket.

Sometimes, for items such as insulin vials, insulin pens, or ointment, the prescription label is attached to the outside box packaging. In that case, carry your medication in the original box.

"If you've thrown away the box already, you should get a copy of the prescription from your health care provider or pharmacist," says Davida F. Kruger, MSN, APRN-BC, BC-ADM, of the Henry Ford

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Medwatch Is Watching

Have you ever had your blood glucose meter malfunction or experienced a serious side effect of a drug? MedWatch wants to know.

This U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) program keeps tabs on safety issues for medical devices, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and special nutritional products such as dietary supplements or cosmetics.

Consumers and health care professionals may report problems with devices or drugs by calling 1-800-332-1088. You may also submit a

form on the Internet (www.fda.gov/medwatch) to report problems.

Submitting a report allows the FDA to investigate and take action. For example, MedWatch issues public health advisories, notices about recalls, and copies of letters that manufacturers send to physicians and pharmacists. These notices are posted on MedWatch's Web site (see address above), where you can also sign up for an e-newsletter with the latest safety news.

—Kate Ruder

Medical Center in Detroit. Kruger is author of *The Diabetes Travel Guide*.

You may carry diabetes-related supplies such as insulin dispensing products, jet injectors, pens, infusers, syringes (when accompanied by insulin), lancets, blood glucose monitors, test strips, insulin pumps, and pump supplies.

“Don’t pack your medications in your checked luggage,” says Roger P. Austin, MS, RPh, CDE, a clinical pharmacy specialist at Henry Ford Health System in Sterling Heights, Mich.

“Not only is there the chance your luggage could get lost, but there is also the issue of

changes in temperature and air pressure in the luggage holds of the aircraft,” he says.

TSA allows liquids or gels to prevent low blood glucose. Nevertheless, Kruger recommends carrying glucose tablets or hard candy instead to prevent any hassles with security.

As an extra precaution, Kruger recommends asking your health care provider for a travel letter detailing all the medications you take for your diabetes.

To make travel smoother, she also recommends putting all your medications and diabetes-related supplies in a large zip-top plastic bag that you can easily take out and present to security. You can save time by

not having to root through your purse or carry-on to locate these items.

In September 2006, TSA announced that travelers may bring onto airplanes beverages and other items that were purchased in airports beyond the security check points. In addition, they may carry travel toiletries (in containers of 3 oz. or less) that fit into a clear, quart-size, zip-top plastic bag.

These rules were in place as this issue of *Forecast* went to press, but they are often amended. Visit the TSA Web site for updates: www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm

—Kate Ruder