Who is the leaflet for? What is its aim?

This leaflet is for young people with diabetes. It’s aim is to give practical tips on how to manage diabetes while planning travels.

Preparing for long distance travels

1. What do I need to check before departure?

When planning overseas travel, the diabetes team can provide specific advice on diabetes management and common travel related problems. Please speak to the diabetes team in advance before you travel. Before departure:

- Make sure you have medical travel insurance covering diabetes
- Check if special vaccinations are needed
  - A customs letter provided by the diabetes team
  - A copy of your repeat prescription
  - Cool bag to store your insulins
  - Make sure you double the amount of supplies- equipment/insulins you take with you.
  Please speak to your GP so that you can order enough supplies before you go

2. What do I need to take with me?

Always carry with you:

- Adequate supplies of insulin pens, pen needles/syringes, pump infusion sets (for pump users make sure you take your insulin pens with you also – long acting and quick acting insulin)
- Blood glucose meter, strips, lancets.
  - Make sure you have your meter settings this includes your carbohydrate ratios and insulin correction (ISF). If you are on an insulin pump make sure you upload your pump before you go so you have the pumps up to date settings just in case you need to go back to injections. Also have the contact details of the customer care line number for your pump.
- Glucagon kit
- Blood Ketone meter and ketone strips and copy of sick day rules
- Sharps bin or small container to dispose of your needles/cannulas/lancets/strips
- Rapid-acting carbohydrates to treat hypoglycaemia + extra food in case of delays
- Medicine for minor illnesses or for travel sickness
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- Identification, ie medical identification bracelet or necklace indicating you have diabetes
- A copy of your repeat prescription items

Air travel and insulin

1. During travel
During travel, carry your insulin in your hand luggage at all times, as it can freeze in the hold of an aircraft. People with diabetes can still take insulin with them onto the aircraft as long as they have been made aware. It is also important you take with you the customs letter provided to you by the diabetes team. This letter explains why you are carrying syringes/injection devices, insulins, cannulas for your insulin pump and/or wearing a Continuous glucose sensor (CGMS). We advise that you contact the airline in advance for the most up to date information on your diabetes equipment and informing them if you wear an insulin pump and/or CGM so that you are prepared.

2. Dose adjustments
When travelling north or south, no adjustments are needed. However, east or west travel across time zones can shorten or extend the day. Usually insulin adjustments are unnecessary if you’re crossing fewer than five time zones (less than five hour time-lag).

If you travel east across more than five time zones, your day will shorten and you may need a reduction in insulin doses because insulin doses would be given closer than normal with the risk of hypoglycaemia. On the other hand, westward travel means a longer day and insulin doses may need to be increased.

Frequent blood glucose monitoring is also recommended while travelling.

You may find it useful to keep your wristwatch unadjusted during the flight to see the original time.

Contacts/Further information

www.friouk.com – To keep insulins cool during travel

www.jdrf.org.uk/living-with-type-1/everyday-life/travelling/ - Travel tips

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E-mail: Kidz.diabetes@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
Telephone: Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00 01223274638
Out of hours: 01223 245151, ask for ‘child diabetes on rotawatch’

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.info@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
Authors/ contact number  Children’s services – 01223 245151
Pharmacist  Nigel Gooding
Publish/Review date  November 2017/November 2020
Version number/Ref  V2/PIN3095/25118