Security Guidelines for Air Travel With Diabetes

If you have diabetes, you should be aware of recent changes to airport security that will impact your packing and preparation for air travel. The following tips can help you make traveling with your diabetes management tools easier:

??Make sure all medication has the proper labels with the name that matches the passenger’s ticket.

??Give yourself enough time to check in and board the plane. Anticipate that you will be stopped, searched, and possibly questioned about your diabetes supplies. As stress can affect your diabetes, give yourself enough time to comfortably navigate security checkpoints.

??Be prepared with a prescription from your doctor for every diabetes supply you may be carrying. Again, make sure that the prescription name matches the one on your ticket.

??The same applies for any continuous glucose monitoring device you may be wearing. Because these devices are relatively new, TSA personnel are likely to be unfamiliar with them. Bring your prescription to avoid problems.

??Make sure you bring syringes and vials of insulin in their original packaging and with a prescription. Even if you use an insulin pump, be sure to bring back-up insulin and syringes.

??Don’t panic if your insulin cannot be refrigerated for the flight. It will last in room temperature for up to several weeks.

??Know what is and isn’t allowed by the TSA guidelines: Prescription medicine with a name that matches the passenger’s ticket; up to 8 oz. of liquid (insulin) or low blood sugar treatment gel and up to 4 oz. of non-prescription liquid medications are permitted.

??If you need to bring extra diabetes supplies that are in excess of the amount allowed in your carry on, be sure to pack them in your checked luggage. Since checked baggage may be subjected to cold temperatures, be sure to carefully insulate any insulin bottles. Inspect the insulin after you arrive for crystallization or cloudiness. If you suspect that the insulin may be spoiled, discard the bottle and do not use it.

??Many people with diabetes carry a tube of cake icing to treat a hypoglycemic episode – for your travels, replace this cake icing with a gel marketed specifically for the treatment of low blood glucose.

??If you travel with a glucagon kit, be sure that you have your prescription for it and that it matches the name on your ticket.

??If a discussion about your diabetes supplies occurs at the security checkpoints, take measures to stay calm. Ask to speak with the Transportation Security Officer Supervisor if the discussion escalates to an uncomfortable level.

**Pump wearers**

Although insulin pump manufacturers indicate that pumps can safely go through airport security systems, pump wearers may request a visual inspection rather than walking through the metal detector or being hand-wanded. Note that this may subject you to closer scrutiny or a “pat-down.”

??Advise the screener that the insulin pump cannot be removed because it is connected to a catheter inserted under your skin.

??Insulin pumps and supplies must be accompanied by insulin with a label clearly identifying the medication.

??If you feel you must lock your bags, use a TSA-approved lock that screeners can open without having to damage the lock or your luggage. These locks feature a special symbol that security personnel are trained to recognize.

For more information on the recent changes to air travel policies, visit the Transportation Security website at www.tsa.gov.

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