

**PAEDIATRIC DIABETES MANAGEMENT**  
**HOW TO MANAGE DIABETES WHILST ON HOLIDAY**

**Patient information Leaflet**



**November 2018**

Going on holiday for the first time having diabetes can seem daunting . A new climate and change in routine shouldn't stop the family from having a fun and active holiday

This leaflet advises how best to manage diabetes whilst on holiday with some useful tips.

## Before you go

Early planning and organisation will make going away much easier

- Check with your travel agent regarding vaccinations which may be needed.
- If travelling abroad it is wise to consider flight times as a daytime flight will be less disruptive to your child's diabetes.
- Inform your diabetes nurse of your holiday plans so they can help you and give you plenty of advice
- Your diabetes nurse will give you a travel letter to take explaining that you need to carry sharps, insulin and food/snacks for hypo's etc in your hand luggage
- You may want to take a copy of the last prescription with you and a copy of the last clinic letter
- You could locate the nearest pharmacy and doctors to where you are staying should you need to seek medical advice
- You must inform the travel insurance company of your child's diabetes
- If travelling within Europe you can obtain an EHIC application form from your local post office.
- It is advised to use a cool bag (FRIO) to keep your insulin cool while travelling and also while you are in a hot climate on holiday
- Your holiday accommodation must have access to a fridge for storing your spare insulin

## Extra supplies

Approx 2 weeks before your holiday you need to order extra supplies from your GP ie.

- Double your usual order of insulin
- Hypostop /glucogel
- Lancets for blood glucose testing
- Needles for insulin pen
- Blood glucose testing strips
- Blood ketone testing strips
- Batteries for blood glucose meter
- Spare insulin pen/pens

You will also need to take your usual supply of :-

- Glucagon
- BD Safe Clipper

## Flying

Here are a few things to consider if you are flying:

- ✓ Don't pack any insulin, Glucagon, testing strips in your suitcase. The freezing temperatures in the hold can damage these supplies. Spare needles and lancets however are ok to be packed in your suitcase
- ✓ Consider spreading your supplies between your cases/hand luggage, to account for a case going missing
- ✓ Keep plenty of snacks at hand in case there are delays to flights
- ✓ Plane meals can be low in carbohydrate so you may want to ask the attendants for extra bread/crackers etc if you are low on snacks. You don't need to order a 'diabetic meal'
- ✓ Check blood glucose levels regularly especially during a long flight
- ✓ Keep hypo remedies at hand

## Making insulin adjustments

- Whether you are travelling on a long/short haul flight or in the UK it is important that you contact your Diabetes nurse at least **two weeks** before your holiday for advice on adjusting insulin times/doses etc
- Try not to worry about keeping blood sugars as tightly controlled as at home. Checking blood glucose levels regularly will help prevent highs and lows. But be aware blood glucose levels may be affected by:-
  - ❖ Excitement
  - ❖ Changes in climate (hot weather usually lowers blood glucose levels)
  - ❖ Changes in routine
  - ❖ Lots of exercise, swimming
  - ❖ Changes in meal times/eating patterns/new foods

Your diabetes nurse will discuss all of the above with you prior to your holiday in order to ensure that good control of your child's diabetes is maintained during your holiday.

## Whilst your away

- ✓ In a hot climate make sure you drink plenty of sugar free fluids to replace fluids lost through sweating
- ✓ If your children are going to a kids club, make sure the staff know how to treat a hypo and manage the diabetes for the time they are with them
- ✓ You may need to keep your insulin pen you are using in a 'FRIO' bag during the day to keep it stored less than 25 degrees. It may affect the insulin and cause it to be less effective. If your insulin is usually clear and it becomes cloudy or it sticks to the side of the cartridge, throw away and use a new cartridge.
- ✓ Also blood glucose meters may be affected by direct sunlight/ extreme cold temperatures so best to keep in the shade or cool bag

## Managing illness on holiday

- The thought of looking after diabetes and illness on holiday can be daunting. Take your 'Managing illness' leaflet away with you and manage it as you would do at home
- Ask Jenny/Karen to explain managing sick days if you haven't had to do this yet so you feel confident to do so while you are away.
- You may want to take a first aid pack with you with supplies such as Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, oral rehydrate solution (Dioralyte),
- Never omit insulin.
- If you are unable to safely manage your child's illness you must seek medical advice. Seeking medical advice should be covered by your travel insurance, so don't hesitate if you have concerns.

### Who to contact for advice

Paediatric Diabetes Nurse Specialists during office hours 08.30- 16.30

- **Office:** 0161 922 5262 (Mon-Wed)
- **Karen Wright** 0161 922 4844 (Mon-Fri)
- **Jenny Butterworth** 0161 922 5433 (Tues-Fri)

**Mobile:** 07760991621 (Karen)  
07775032136 (Jenny)

**Out of hours:** 0161 922 6000 - hospital switchboard and ask for on-call paediatric registrar

## Other Useful Contacts or Information

*NHS Direct*

*Patient Information Centre*

*Diabetes UK*

*JDRF*

## Source of Good Practice

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/Information-for-parents/Living-with-diabetes-new/Travel-and-holidays/>

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information

