



**PAEDIATRIC DIABETES MANAGEMENT**  
**HOW TO MANAGE DIABETES WHILST ON HOLIDAY**  
**USING AN INSULIN PUMP**

**Patient information Leaflet**



March 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
- Insulin for the pump and pens
- Glucagon
- Double the amount of pump supplies, cannula's, giving sets etc
- Hypostop /glucogel
- Lancets for blood glucose testing
- Needles for insulin pens
- Blood glucose testing strips
- Blood ketone testing strips and ketone meter
- Batteries for blood glucose meter and pump
- Spare insulin pen/pens
- If you have the Omnipod pump, you can ring the company to ask for a spare handset to take away
- For Insight take spare Expert meter with up to date settings incase the pump handset fails

## Flying

Here's 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, lancets, cannulas and tubing 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 incase 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-consider using glucosetabs, glucojuice, hypogel as these are classed as medications and are less likely to be confiscated

***It is suggested that you contact your airline as they may ask you for the following information:***

***Some airlines state that the use of battery powered medical equipment on board will only be allowed if that specific piece of equipment has been cleared for use in-flight by their engineering team. They may require the following information:***

- ✓ Make/manufacture of the unit
- ✓ Model number
- ✓ Serial number

You will also need to think about:

- You will need to declare to security you are wearing an insulin pump
- You can walk through the ordinary scanner
- **NOT** the x-ray scanner as this may damage or affect the pump
- If your pump has a Bluetooth facility you may need to turn this off during take off and landing
- You may need to suspend your pump during take off and landing (the change in pressure may cause air bubbles in the tubing or unwanted bolus of insulin)
- Monitor your blood glucose levels more regularly during the flight

### 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-four weeks** before your holiday for advise on adjusting insulin times/doses etc
- 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/unsure of carbohydrate content
  - ❖ Consider using Temporary Basal Rate (TBR)

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 the pump in a 'FRIO' bag during the day to keep it cool (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 '**Sick Day**' leaflet away with you and manage it as you would do at home
- If you suspect your child is unwell, check blood ketones and blood sugar at least every 2 hours and follow "sick day rules"
- 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

- **Karen Wright** 0161 922 4844 (Mon-Thurs)
- **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/>

