



# Travelling with medicines

This leaflet provides general information to help you prepare for a trip and to give medicines whilst travelling

If your child is on a course of treatment or needs to take medicines regularly, it is important that you continue to give these whilst travelling or on holiday. This may be difficult while you are away from home and your usual routine, so you need to plan ahead.

This leaflet provides information to help you prepare for a trip and to give medicines whilst travelling. If you are going on a long trip, discuss this with your doctor, as you may need to make special arrangements for prescriptions and supplies of medicines.

If your child has complex health needs and takes several medicines, talk to your healthcare professional before travelling.

Information about vaccinations and general healthcare whilst travelling can be found on the NHS Choices website (information at end of this leaflet).

## Preparing for your trip

It is important to plan ahead, to make sure that you have everything you need.

- The medicines you take with you should be in the original packaging, with the pharmacy label showing your child's name, the medicine name and the dose.
- Similarly, any medical equipment you need (such as needles and syringes) should be in the original packaging, with the pharmacy label showing your child's name.
- Make sure that medicines will not reach their "use by" date while you are away.
- If your child's medicines need to be kept in the fridge, you will need to use a cool bag or insulated pouch and ice packs to keep the medicine cold while travelling. You will need to think about how you will keep the medicine cold throughout your trip (e.g. if you are camping). Ask your community pharmacist for advice.
- Ask your doctor for a letter that states the condition(s) your child has, and the medicines they are taking. (Your doctor may charge a fee for doing this.)
- Keep a copy of your child's prescription with you at all times while travelling.
- If you are travelling outside of the UK, contact your family doctor or practice nurse about your travel plans at least 2 months before you start your trip, in case you need to make any special arrangements. Additional information about travelling outside of the UK is provided later in the leaflet.

## How much medicine should I take?

- Work out how many days you will be away for, including the days spent travelling. Take enough medicine for each day, plus some extra in case your return is delayed.

## How should I pack the medicines?

- You should keep the medicines in the packaging they came in, with the pharmacy label showing your child's name, the medicine name and the dose.
- It is a good idea to take two sets of medicine; put one in your day bag and one in your suitcase, in case you lose either bag. Each set should contain all the medicines your child needs for a few days.
- Keep the medicines together, in a sealed, waterproof bag.
- Remember to take a proper medicine spoon or oral syringe for any liquid medicines.

## How can I make sure that I give my child their medicines at the right time?

- If your child usually takes their medicine with meals or at bedtime, try to keep to a similar routine while you are away, which will help you to remember.
- You could set up reminders on your mobile phone or using a kitchen timer.
- Keep a note book with you and write down the times that you give medicines, so that you can make sure you do not give the next dose too soon, and you know whether you have given a dose. This will be useful to anyone else who may give the medicine to your child.

## If you are travelling outside of the UK

- Contact your family doctor or practice nurse at least 2 months before you start your trip, in case you need to make any special arrangements.
- Take with you a letter from your doctor explaining your child's condition and medicines they are taking. (Your doctor may charge a fee for providing this.) It is a good idea to have this letter translated into the local language(s) of the country you are visiting. This will be useful if your child needs any medical help while away or if you have problems at Customs. Keep this letter with you at all times while travelling, together with a copy of your child's prescription.
- If you are travelling across time zones, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice about when to give medicines, particularly if your child requires insulin.

- You will need to check regulations about taking your child's medicines out of the UK and into the country or countries you are visiting.
- Note that a few medicines are "controlled substances", which means that you need a licence to take these medicines into another country. These drugs include benzodiazepines (used to treat anxiety), some strong painkillers, and some medicines that contain hormones. A list of these drugs is provided [here](#). If your child is taking any of these medicines, contact your pharmacist or doctor for advice. You may want to contact the consulate for the country you are visiting. Contact details can be found [here](#).
- Check whether the airline has any regulations about carrying medicines in your hand luggage or in hold luggage.
- If your child takes liquid medicine, ask your pharmacist to provide a small bottle of the medicine (fully labelled) that you can take on a plane.
- You should have comprehensive travel insurance. You must tell the insurance company about the conditions your child has; if you don't give this information to the insurance company, they may refuse to provide cover should your child need any treatment while you are abroad. Patient support groups may be able to provide information or advice about travel insurance.

#### Where can I get more information?

- NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) provides further information about travelling with medicines.
- Patient support groups can often provide practical advice about travelling with a particular condition.

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)



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For details on the sources of information used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

We have taken great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up to date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.