

Travel Tips for Adults

Travel is very rewarding and filled with the unexpected. Research your destination well – visas, vaccinations, transport, health alerts. Make copies of all travel and health documents. Purchase a changeable ticket so you can reschedule if unwell.

Check the latest travel advice for your destination and subscribe to receive free email notification each time the travel advice for your destination is updated.

Reciprocal Health Care Agreements

The Australian Government has agreements with some countries to cover some essential treatments and medicines. If there is no reciprocal health agreement.

- Make sure you are well before you enter into that country.
- Have a plan should you get sick e.g. travel as quickly as possible either home or to a country that has a reciprocal health policy.
- Take plenty of precautions e.g. be strict with hand washing and hygiene.
- Take out health insurance. If only getting general health cover, and not cover for CF, some countries are very expensive if requiring medical treatment.

Travel Insurance: Tips for obtaining travel insurance

Travel insurance companies and their policies are on the web. Most have Product Disclosure Statements which set out the terms and conditions, what cover is included and the exclusions. It is very important to look at the definition of Pre-Existing Conditions (PEC).

- Travel insurance companies who may cover CF are Cover More, Columbus Direct, Travel Scene Insurance, City Bond SureTravel and World Assist.
- You can call and ask the travel insurance companies whether they will cover you.
- Ask your travel agent or an insurance broker if they can get you covered.

Health Preparation

- Speak to your CF clinic about your plans to travel so that they can help prepare you.
- Get a full health check. Some centres will suggest a course of IV antibiotics.

- Get all prescriptions and medications for the time needed whilst away (both trade and generic names)
- Get letters from your CF clinic explaining your diagnosis, medications and nebuliser; especially if requiring a compressor, oxygen bottle or insulin.
- Have the CF clinic contact details with you.
- Have a summary of current health status, usual antibiotics and possible treatments for an exacerbation. Copy these and prescriptions and leave in several places.
- A 'fitness to fly' letter may be required with some airlines.
- Research the location of the local CF clinic at your destination.
- Travel nebulisers are available for loan in some states. Check with your CF organisation.

Medications

- All countries have regulations about medications, so it's important to check beforehand about these regulations.
- Some countries may not stock particular medications so if possible it's important to carry ALL your medications with you unless there is a reciprocal health agreement where you are travelling. Check beforehand if these countries are likely to stock your medications.
- Carry Medicare number and ALL scripts with you.
- Take an extra one week supply of all medications in case of unavoidable extended delay (e.g. volcanic ash).
- Make sure all medications are clearly labelled, are in the original bottles and are left unopened unless using.
- Keep essential medications as carry-on luggage
- Notify the airline well before travelling if needing to use any needles or other devices on the plane.
- Be ready with your letter explaining that you have CF and all your medications prior to boarding the plane.

Heat sensitive medications. Obtain a good pharmaceutical grade ice pack for long distance travel. The FRIO cooling wallet is a good option. It is able to maintain its cold temperature for a minimum of 45 hours through the evaporation of the water. See link below.

Flights

- Oxygen levels on flights can be reduced which probably won't affect most people however it's important to discuss this with your CF team to see if a drop in blood oxygen levels is something that might affect you and oxygen may be needed.

- If oxygen is required it can sometimes be supplied by the airline, however needs to be requested at least 2 weeks in advance as it needs to be approved by the airline beforehand. Your CF clinic can assist with this.
- Wheel chairs are also an option and can be made available by the airline if given adequate notice. Allow extra time to check in if this is required.
- Keep well hydrated.

Eating, drinking and cross-infection

- Follow good hand hygiene. Use hand sanitiser, wash frequently
- Use bottled water if unsure of local drinking water
- Avoid ice cubes, juice mixes and other sources of possible contaminated water
- If in a hot climate take electrolytes or salt tablets
- Wash all fruit and vegetables with a safe source of water or peel
- Avoid food from street stalls and kiosks
- Avoid non-pasteurised foods e.g. milk, yoghurt etc.
- Take extra enzymes for high fat foods
- Watch alcohol intake as it may make antibiotics non-effective

Useful Resources

- 2015 CF Conference 'Travel: Removing the Barriers to Live Free' www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUPBS1c09z8
- Travelling with Cystic Fibrosis- CF Buzz www.cfbuzz.org/cf-lifestyle/cf-life/travel
- Travel Tips for Cystic Fibrosis www.cysticfibrosis.ca/uploads/intro%20to%20treatment/EN_TRAVEL_TIPS_FOR_CF_WEB-Compressed.pdf
- Traveling with CF- CF Foundation www.cff.org/Life-With-CF/Daily-Life/Traveling-With-CF
- FRIIO Cool Pack www.frioinsulincoolingcase.com/
- Reciprocal Health Care Agreements www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/medicare/reciprocal-health-care-agreements

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