

Libre Life Briefing



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And lots of travel tips

HOW TO TRAVEL

LIBRE LIFE SPECIAL REPORT SPRING 2021

Welcome

This is a Libre Life Special Report for Spring 2021, our online magazine written especially for Libre sensor wearers.

In this issue we are covering How to Travel which originally was going to form our Summer issue, but with the roadmap changing in terms of Covid restrictions in the UK it seemed pertinent to bring forward our guide for travelling when you're a type one wearing a Libre sensor.

This Special Report is loosely split into 3 areas, *preparing for a holiday*, *the journey* and *at your destination*. I hope you'll find lots of useful information and tips that will help you enjoy your break. There's a packing list to help ensure you've got everything you're likely to need on page 5. I hope this proves handy.

After so long in lock down we most certainly need an alternative view, whether it's a beach, the mountains, lakes or wherever you are planning to go, have a fantastic time!

Thanks for reading. We hope you'll join us next time.

Samantha x



PS

Our next issue will be asking if you're Superhuman, so please do keep an eye out to discover what it takes. Details of how to subscribe to ensure you receive your next copy of Libre Life are on page 10.

Disclaimer

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All information here is correct to the best of knowledge at the date of publication. We cannot be responsible for any errors or omissions. Availability and costs of products mentioned here are subject to change.

PREPARATION



Diabetes shouldn't be a barrier to travel and the key, as is often the case with managing type one diabetes, is in the preparation.

This guide is intended to give you the information you will need to prepare for a holiday or individual trip, with insights on what you should think of in advance and tips to help your journey go smoothly. We'll follow a chronological order covering the preparation before you go, what you should think of in relation to the actual travel experience and what you may need to consider once you've arrived at your destination.

GET INFORMATION IN ADVANCE

Check with your insulin manufacturer that insulin is available in the country you are visiting and if there are any specific regulations that you will need to comply with or documents that you need to produce. It's also worth checking the availability of sensors or pump supplies if you use these. Note, the sensors you use may not be compatible with the type available in other countries.

Find out where you can get (emergency) supplies of insulin at your destination. Take extra supplies if it's not easily available.

Make sure that the climate won't affect how your insulin or blood glucose monitor works. Speak to your diabetes team before your trip if you think you may need extra equipment eg. a spare

pump.

Think about how to store your insulin and find out whether there's a fridge at your accommodation. You may also need to purchase a bag suitable for carrying insulin and keeping it cold eg. frio bags (www.friouk.com) – these can be used for the journey and when out in hot conditions.

VISIT THE DOCTOR

Ensure you go to the doctor in advance to arrange a prescription for all medications you will need including refills and extra supplies etc. The NHS suggests that when travelling, a person with diabetes should plan to take twice the amount of medicines and medical supplies that they would normally need. In addition, these may be needed if you need to quarantine or self-isolate in the country you're visiting, you may have to stay longer than planned.



It's also recommended that you take a doctor's note that confirms your medical condition, how this is treated (ie. if using a pump or injections) and what medications are needed (including use of a sensor if applicable). A letter is sometimes available from your diabetes care team too. Bear in mind that this letter may be useful in several situations whilst travelling or at your destination, such as at airport security or a pharmacy.

Another consideration is the timing of your insulin/medication if you are travelling across time zones and you could ask your doctor or diabetes care team for advice as appropriate.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is likely that you will need to declare your diabetes to a travel insurance company to get appropriate cover. Many policies don't include pre-existing medical conditions, such as diabetes so check this is covered and includes terms that insure you against lost, stolen or damaged medication, as well as medical and hospital expenses.

Note: It's not compulsory to buy diabetic travel insurance and cover varies between providers.

CONTACT YOUR AIRLINE

If travelling by aeroplane, you should contact the airline you're travelling with beforehand to discuss any medical devices you need to take on board. Some airlines require you to notify them of medical equipment and whether you will be carrying needles in advance. You may need to provide additional documentation.

Most airlines will give you an additional allowance for carrying medical supplies, usually 5 kg.

TIP

Many pump companies offer a hire or loan scheme for international travel. Contact your pump manufacturer to enquire.

EHIC CARDS

If you have a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) card ie. it has not expired; this is still valid for use in the EU until the expiry date even though the UK has left the EU. For new applications, there is a new type of card, the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) which essentially provides the same cover as the EHIC card. You will need to apply for this before leaving the UK and carry it with you whilst in the EU.

Note: not all countries provide cover that is equivalent to that available through the NHS and don't cover repatriation to the UK.

PACKING FOR THE JOURNEY

It's recommended that you carry insulin, sensors and other medication in your hand luggage, and don't forget that insulin not currently in use will need to be kept cool so use a Frio bag or similar. [If insulin is packed in checked-in luggage there is a risk that it gets frozen whilst in transit in the hold of the aircraft. This could render the insulin useless.]

Due to the Covid pandemic you will now need to ensure you have a sufficient supply of face masks or coverings and it's advisable to take your own hand sanitiser too – this should fit with the restriction of 100ml for hand luggage, although there is an exception to this for medications.

Think ahead in terms of meal times and pack extra snacks in your hand luggage in case of delays, as well as hypos.

KEEPING INSULIN COLD



Opened insulin should be kept at room temperature as it operates best between 13°C and 26°C. However, when carrying unused bottles, pens or cartridges of insulin these will need to be kept cold. Frio bags are ideal for this purpose and can be kept in your hand luggage.

Be careful not to let insulin cartridges touch ice packs or some into direct contact with ice as this could make it ineffective.

TIP

Keep an inventory or spreadsheet of all your medication and medical supplies.

DAY OF TRAVEL



It's a good idea to get to the airport, ferry terminal or train station early to avoid any last minute problems about carrying your medication. If you need assistance, or are picking up a 'Hidden Disabilities' lanyard you may need to find the customer service desk which may be in different location.

Make sure to eat healthily and keep hydrated. Take more frequent readings/scans to ensure your glucose levels stay within your range.

Keep your Doctor's letter on you or in your hand luggage, stating the medication you need and what you are carrying including any equipment.

It can also be worth considering wearing ID that identifies you as having diabetes. One option is a 'hidden disabilities' lanyard (see resources below for further information on these in a Love My Libre blog). Many airports in the UK have these lanyards available from the customer service.

Don't forget to take a copy of 'sick day rules', not only for your reference but it may help those you're with or helping you in an emergency situation. And even if you don't check ketones regularly, it's a good idea to have ketone sticks with you when you're in a different environment.

TIP

Don't forget spare batteries, cables and plugs, especially for back-up.

PACKING CHECKLIST

MEDICAL DEVICES

- FS Libre sensor packs
- FS Libre reader (back-up to phone)
- Glucose monitor
- CGM device eg. Bubble, MiaoMiao
- Finger-prick test pen

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

- Insulin pens - basal & bolus
- Glucose test strips
- Insulin cartridges
- Pump infusion sets & set inserter
- Pump reservoirs
- Bottles of insulin (if using a pump)
- Ketone test strips
- Lancets
- Needles
- Alcohol wipes

FOR EMERGENCIES

- Hypo treats
- Glucagon kit

DOCUMENTATION

- Doctor's letter
- Copy of Prescription
- Log/blood sugar record book
- Copy of 'Sick Day Rules'

OTHER

- Medical ID
- Armband or cover to protect sensor
- Hidden Disabilities lanyard

MEDICAL AWARENESS CARD



The CAA and the Airport Operators Association (AOA) have produced a Medical Device Awareness Card (see above) for passengers with an insulin pump or CGM.

This was developed in conjunction with the mother of a type 1 who had experienced a very difficult situation with airport security in Dubai when a security guard insisted that the son's insulin pump should be removed and put through an x-ray machine. The boy refused and the family were held for over 2 hours in a police room, nearly missing their connecting flight.

The incident (obviously) had a significant effect on his glucose levels and following the stress caused, his mum resolved to campaign for better awareness of diabetes and medical equipment and so working with the CAA the Medical Awareness Card was rolled out in UK airports.

AIRPORT SECURITY

It's best to take insulin pens, sensors and other medication in original packaging where possible. Although most security staff will have experience of insulin pumps, it's not always the case if you are travel to more unusual or remote places, so you may need to explain why your devices cannot be removed.

At security, advise the security personnel that you have diabetes and that you are carrying your supplies on board. Insulin pumps and CGMs must not be either screened by x-ray or pass through the security scanner. Instead you should ask for an alternative screening method ie. pat down check on you, and for medical supplies (including any spares you are carrying), ask for them to be hand-checked.



Abbott advise that you should not wear a FreeStyle Libre sensor through a full body scanner, as this may cause the sensor to fail. If you choose to go thorough a body scanner you should remove your sensor beforehand. For other types of sensors and medical equipment you should check with the manufacturer as instructions vary.

THE JOURNEY

Libre sensors are able to operate as normal whilst flying. However, the wireless functionality of insulin pumps and CGM can interfere with aircraft communication and navigation systems and you may need to remove your CGM and pump whilst in the air if your CGM cannot function without a wireless signal. You should ensure you have the right equipment to manage your diabetes with an insulin pen in these circumstances. You may also need to test your glucose by carrying out a finger-prick test.

Pumps should be disconnected at take off and landing but otherwise can operate as normal onboard. Libre readers should also be powered off during take off and landing.

You will be able to inject insulin as normal on a plane as insulin pens are unaffected by the onboard environment although changes in pressure can cause bubbles in insulin cartridges.



It's a good idea to carry a small container for your 'sharps' although many airlines will carry a medical sharps box that you could use.

Airline food is often unhealthy and can spike sugar levels so it is recommended that you take healthy options and snacks with you to try to keep your glucose levels in range.

The air on an aeroplane is often dry and this can lead to dehydration. As glucose levels can be significantly impacted when a person is dehydrated, it is recommended that you ensure you keep up your fluid intake whilst flying and it's best to avoid alcoholic drinks.

TIME ZONES

When crossing time zones, it can be difficult to keep to a routine and time your insulin injections. There is also risks associated with inactivity and irregular meals.

Where possible, it's best to plan ahead and make adjustments to align your insulin timing and routine to your destination before you leave

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

There is an increased risk of deep vein thrombosis ie. blood clotting in the legs, for those with diabetes when flying. It is recommended that you move your legs regularly when seated on a long haul flight and get up to stretch your legs from time to time. Compression socks may also help.

one time zone to another. Scanning your sensor more frequently will help you to see if corrections are needed and make adjustments depending on your body's needs. It's still important to carb count and it may help you to take a copy of Carbs & Cals with you, or download the app in advance.

When travelling with an insulin pump there are two options for adjusting the settings to your destination, either make changes on the airplane or once you have landed. It's likely you will need to make small changes to basal rates for a couple of days to account for the change of time and meal times.

For long flights, you may need to adjust basal rates as you'll largely be inactive and so glucose levels may rise. This may also happen if you are dehydrated.

JET LAG



Jet lag can have a significant effect on glucose levels and adjusting your sleep pattern is usually key to minimising this effect. Many travellers will recommend that you adjust your awake/sleep pattern to that of your destination country. Again, monitoring your levels more frequently with your sensor and making corrections where appropriate will help to ensure you levels don't fluctuate too much.

TIP

When travelling eastward, your day will feel shorter so less insulin may be needed, whereas when travelling westward you may find the opposite is true.

HOT HOLIDAYS



If you're taking it easy on holiday and are less active than usual, then you may find that glucose levels go higher. Insulin is usually absorbed more quickly from in hot weather increasing the risk of hypos. Remember to scan or finger-prick more regularly and ensure that you have suitable supplies of snacks to enable you to deal with hypos.

It's a good guide to think that if it's hot enough to sunbath then it's possible that your insulin, and other medical equipment eg. sensor or reader, can be affected by the heat, either giving inaccurate readings or not working. As you'll probably know, insulin can degrade and stop working if it gets too hot, so you should consider keeping these items covered over or kept in refrigerated/cool bags.

CAR JOURNEYS

On long journeys you should check your glucose level at least every 2 hours and it's best to stop frequently to ensure you 'stretch your legs'. Ensure you have supplies for dealing with hypos and remember that you need to take time to recover from a hypo, so you shouldn't drive until you glucose level has been above 4 mmol/L for at least 45 minutes afterwards.

8 TIPS FOR WHEN IT'S HOT!

- 1** Stay hydrated and limit exposure to direct sunlight, especially at peak times of the day. Why not take regular sips of water throughout the day when you perform a scan?
- 2** Scan regularly to check your levels and take note of the arrows when making adjustments.
- 3** Keep diabetes supplies and equipment (including sensor reader or phone) in a cool place and out of direct sunlight.
- 4** Keep treats (fast acting glucose) handy, or near your sensor reader/phone for dealing with hypos.
- 5** Wear sunscreen, ensuring you cover the feet and toes. Take particular care when applying sun cream around the sensor so not to loosen the adhesion to your skin.
- 6** Cover the sensor often if participating in an energetic activity. Take extra precautions including more regular scans and extra carbs.
- 7** Get medical attention for any heat-related illness eg sun stroke or heat exhaustion. Watch for readings under 3.9 which alert you to low glucose.
- 8** Wear a sweat-wicking and water-resistant Libreband (of course!) to protect your sensor from the hot sun and possibility of falling off.

TAKING A COOLER BREAK



Insulin is less effective in colder temperatures and so you may find that you need more than usual, but beware that when you warm up from being cold insulin already injected/infused can then start working and this can lead to a hypo situation.

In cold conditions there is also an additional risk associated with hypos, as the body uses up more energy to stay warm, there is a risk that this leads to hypothermia.

In general, higher blood sugars will make you feel warmer in cold temperatures, so you should check glucose levels more often to ensure you are not hyperglycaemic – sensor alarms may help to avoid this risk.

If you are skiing or outdoors in an environment where the temperature falls below 0°C, it is advisable to keep your insulin in an insulated container or on your body for warmth. Glucose monitors and sensor readers may also be affected by low temperatures.

Libre sensors operate between 10°C and 25°C, and readers between 10°C and 45°C, so in cold conditions it may be necessary to cover a sensor with extra insulation to keep it working.

TIP

Higher altitude can affect glucose levels and you may need make adjustments for levels being higher than normal.

MORE LIBRE LIFE RESOURCES



Our Libre Life Special Report issued for Summer 2020 includes lots of information and tips for holidaying in hot climates. Click [here](#).



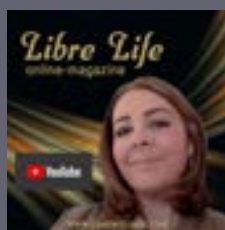
Our Summer 2020 Issue of Libre Life focused on keeping yourself hydrated and how this impacts you when wearing a sensor. Click [here](#).



To find out about the Hidden Disabilities lanyard scheme, you can read our blog [here](#).



Our popular blog on Swimming with a Libre sensor covers all you need to know before getting in the water. Click [here](#).



Our blog on swimming is also available on YouTube and there are other relevant topics too. Our YouTube channel is linked [here](#).

LOVE MY LIBRE



Thank you for reading this Libre Life Briefing presented by Love My Libre Ltd. We are a small family business, born from an idea by my 12-year-old son who wanted to make his mum's sensor look less like a medical device.

From the original concept, we worked in partnership with Warwick Manufacturing Group to further develop and test the armband before launching it in the UK and globally.

Librebands are designed to be worn on the upper arm, similar to the way that a runner wears their phone. The armband is durable and fully adjusts for individual sizing and comfort. Unlike patches and plasters the armband can be taken on and off whenever required and does not fray, curl or irritate.

OUR PRODUCTS

Librebands are recommended by DSNs, doctors and healthcare professionals, and we've been fortunate to receive many positive reviews from our customers worldwide.

"The armband is amazing, my son plays contact rugby, spars in boxing, and plays football. The armband has protected his sensor and then some."

Librebands can be worn with FreeStyle Libre and Libre Sense and are suitable for sports, exercising, swimming and everyday wear. The current range of Libreband designs available is shown below and we also offer Libreband+ for those wearing a 3rd party device with the Libre. A range of Dexbands for Dexcom G6 are shown on our website too.



SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

For more information about us, other designs and new products please visit our website and subscribe to receive a copy of our **Libre Life Newsletter**.

For new subscribers who haven't yet tried a Libreband we offer a 10% discount for purchases from our website, enter **SUBSCRIBE10** at checkout. *Applies to email subscribers only.*

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