

DIABETES &

SUMMER 2015

travelling

A DIABETES BALANCE GUIDE

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

Round-the-world
travel with diabetes

PLUS

Your
holiday
questions
answered

.....
Top
travel tips

.....
Food &
drink

DESTINATION: EVERYWHERE

From planning to
packing, we have
your trip sorted!



HOLIDAY HEALTH

- Sun safety
- Managing illness
- Avoiding DVT

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& Frio travel
goodies

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*More than just a number.

1. Study conducted in 2012 in the UK and the U.S. with 102 diabetes patients. LifeScan, data on file.

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Offer closing date 31st December 2015. Only one free OneTouch® Verio® Meter per person. Meters are subject to availability. This offer is limited to a maximum of 4,000 FREE OneTouch® Verio® Meters. Allow 28 days for delivery.

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ONETOUCH®



Planning a getaway? Then look no further than our special guide to *Diabetes & travelling*. Sorting out the finer details of a trip can be stressful enough – and adding diabetes to the mix can complicate it even more. That's why we've put together this special supplement to guide you through the things you'll need to consider to help that holiday go without a hitch. There are also some great giveaways to grab. Enjoy!

Angela

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UNDER THE WEATHER

If you fall ill on holiday, follow our practical advice on how to manage your diabetes

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Your holiday checklist

This guide will help you to plan and think about all of the areas you should consider so that your holiday is relaxing and enjoyable. Use our handy checklist to make sure you've covered all angles. Have a great trip!


Got it?

- ☐ Letter from your GP, which says you have diabetes and the medication you need to treat it. If you use a pump, this should also be stated in the letter.
- ☐ EHIC (for European destinations). For more on the EHIC, go to www.ehic.org.uk or call 0300 330 1350.
- ☐ Travel insurance documents. Shop around to get the right travel insurance for your needs and remember to declare that you have diabetes.
- ☐ Some form of medical identification – go to shop.diabetes.org.uk
- ☐ Medication and medical equipment, including spare test strips for your meter, ketone strips, lancets, batteries, pump supplies, etc.
- ☐ Needle clipper and sharps disposal container.
- ☐ Carbohydrate snacks, including fast-acting ones (eg glucose tablets) if you're at risk of hypos.
- ☐ Simple first-aid kit, eg plasters, painkillers, and oral rehydration sachets.
- ☐ List of all medicines that you take (generic names).
- ☐ Local currency, in case you need to buy supplies as soon as you arrive.
- ☐ Phone number for the British Embassy in case of an emergency – go to www.fco.gov.uk or call 020 7270 3000.



TRAVEL TIP
Check, check check...
Keep checking you have
everything you need way
before you're due to
set off

TIP
Check, check check...
Keep checking you have
everything you need way
before you're due to
set off



TRAVEL TIP
If you're flying, put insulin in a clear plastic bag – it will be easier to pass through security

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If you're flying, put insulin in a clear plastic bag – it will be easier to pass through security

Need anything else?



**TRAVEL
TIP**

**Make sure you leave
plenty of time to get your
spare medical supplies
and GP letter**

Make sure you leave plenty of time to get your spare medical supplies and GP letter



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TAKE THE WORRY OUT OF TRAVELLING WITH INSULIN



Destination: Everywhere

Having diabetes doesn't need to put a barrier in the way of your travels. Just some extra forward planning can make all the difference to a stress-free break

First things first – medical supplies should be top of the list when it comes to packing. Order everything you need well in advance from your GP and take double the amount you'd normally need. Try to share the load between at least two bags (ideally two passengers, if you're

Keep your cool

Remember, if you treat your diabetes with insulin, it needs to be kept cool. For long journeys, it's worth thinking about a cool bag – there are many to choose from at the Diabetes UK Shop – shop.diabetes.org.uk – if you use an ordinary cool bag instead, make sure the insulin doesn't come into contact with ice packs, as it could freeze and become damaged.

Meters and test strips can also be affected by extreme temperatures. Keep them as close to normal room temperature as possible and store them out of direct sunlight (don't leave them on the back seat during car journeys).

Replacements

In case your medical supplies do get lost or damaged, check whether you'll be able to get replacements at your destination. You can call the pharmaceutical companies that make the products before you travel. Sometimes the same product is available under a different name, so you'll need to know the generic name of your medications, not just the brand name (eg metformin, not Glucophage), and keep a list with you of all the medicines you use. Contact details for the four companies that make insulin are:

- **Lilly: 01256 315000**
- **Nordisk: 0845 600 5055**
- **Sanofi: 01483 505515**
- **Wockhardt UK: 01978 661261.**

If you're using an insulin pump, contact your pump company before you travel to find out if supplies for it will be available at your destination. For diabetes tablets, and other regular medications, look on the packaging to find contact details for the

MORE ADVICE?

- **If you have any particular worries about managing your diabetes while on holiday, talk to your GP or diabetes specialist nurse well in advance. We cover these topics in this guide, but they'll be able to give you individual advice about things like adjusting medication across time zones, managing in hot countries or the effects of holiday sports.**
- **If you want more on resources for people with diabetes in the country you're visiting, find out if there's a diabetes association. The International Diabetes Federation has contact details for all the diabetes associations it's affiliated with. Go to www.idf.org for details.**

Be upfront about your diabetes when looking for travel insurance



travelling with someone else). That way, you'll still have supplies in case one of your bags gets stolen or goes missing, and extra in case you fall ill and need to take more medication or test your blood glucose levels more often.

Think about taking a spare battery for your blood glucose meter, as well as spare test strips and lancets, and spare pump supplies if you use an insulin pump. It's these kinds of things that are sometimes impossible to find when you're abroad.

TRAVEL TIP

If you're flying, ask your doctor for a letter that states that you have diabetes and what medications and equipment you need

manufacturer. If it doesn't say, or you're unsure, ask your GP.

Protect yourself

Travel insurance is vital, especially for any health-related issues that may crop up. But standard off-the-shelf travel insurance policies exclude pre-existing medical conditions. This means that if you fall ill and the problem can be linked in any way to your diabetes, you won't be covered. So, make sure you find a policy that gives you the protection you need. It may take a bit more research and phoning around, but it will be worth it.

Start looking for the best insurance policy well in advance. Be upfront about your diabetes, as well as any other health conditions. When the policy documents arrive, check it's down in writing that you're covered for diabetes-related conditions. Also, make sure your policy includes any sports or activities that you plan to try – sometimes you need to pay extra for this.

People travelling with medical conditions sometimes buy insurance separately from the people they're travelling with. But, if everyone is covered under the same insurance policy, you can all travel home together should one of the party fall sick and need to be brought home. There are many online comparison sites that can give you good deals, but when declaring certain health conditions – like diabetes – you may need to call an operator to talk about it in more detail.

If you're travelling within Europe, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles you to state-provided healthcare for any accidents or illnesses suffered within the European Economic Area or Switzerland. It's no substitute for comprehensive travel insurance and won't cover you for all eventualities, eg if you need to be brought home quickly for medical treatment, but is well worth

**Travel insurance
may take a bit
more research and
phoning around, but
it will be worth it**

having. The card is free and valid for up to five years. For more on the EHIC, or to apply or renew, go to www.ehic.org.uk or call **0300 330 1350**. Be careful about other companies offering EHICs as they may charge a fee.

It's worth protecting yourself financially too, in case your holiday provider goes bust – since this is something most travel insurance policies don't specifically include. Package holidays that include air travel are the safest option, as you are protected by the Air Travel Organisers' Licensing scheme (ATOL). This means the full cost of your holiday will be refunded if the holiday company folds before you set off. If you've already departed, ATOL should meet the costs to allow your holiday to continue or, if this isn't possible, at least get you home.

If you book all the parts of your holiday – accommodation, flight, car hire, etc – separately, you may not be covered if any of the companies you've booked with go under. Paying by credit card offers some protection – if your holiday costs more than £100, you can sometimes claim money back from the credit card company should things go wrong, so this is worth thinking about.

Will you need vaccinations?

You may need to be vaccinated against infectious diseases such as typhoid fever, hepatitis A and meningitis C, depending on where you're travelling to. Diabetes shouldn't affect what vaccinations you have, but it's worth talking to your doctor or nurse if certain jabs could temporarily disrupt your diabetes control, and how you should manage this.

What vaccinations you need depends on various factors, eg the countries you're visiting, how long you're staying, the time of year you're going, and whether you'll be in rural or urban areas. You also need to make sure your polio and tetanus

immunisations are up to date and check if you need anti-malaria tablets. Some vaccinations and tablets need to be taken several weeks in advance, so make sure you see your doctor or practice nurse at least three months before you're due to set off, or as soon as possible if your trip is last minute.

Many vaccinations aren't available on the NHS, so you may need to pay for a private prescription.

- For details, go to www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

TRAVEL TIP

Carry something that identifies you as having diabetes and shows what treatment you should receive in an emergency. Go to shop.diabetes.org.uk

New

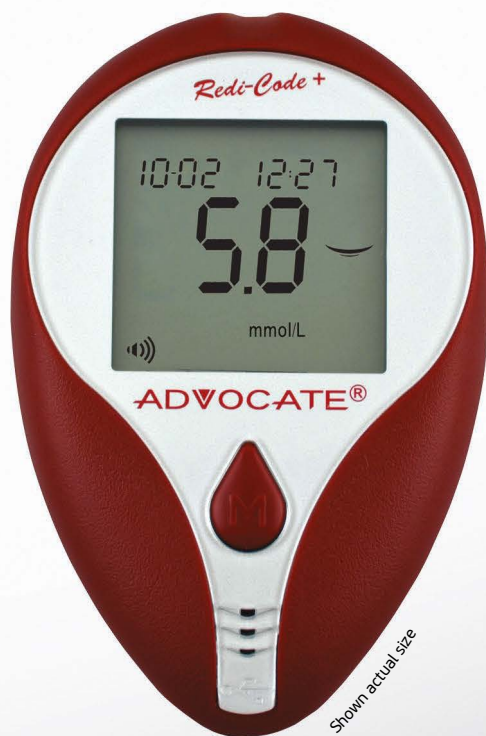
A straightforward approach to monitoring your blood glucose

The Redi-Code+ blood glucose meter has been specifically designed for ease of use.

With only one button and an ergonomic design, the unit is simple to use and comfortable to hold. Audible spoken prompts help guide you through a short set-up and readings are spoken aloud as well as being clearly visible on the large LCD display.

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- ☒ Accurate

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FROM A TO B

And you're off! As much as you've planned for your holiday, travel arrangements don't always go so well, and delays and cancellations are out of your control. But, being prepared will help minimise any negative effects on your diabetes control and will take away any additional stress

Whether it's a short car ride to somewhere in the UK or some far-flung corner of the world, try to think through every aspect of your journey before you set off. For a short drive to the coast, it's the usual things like checking your blood glucose level beforehand if you're at risk of hypos – low blood glucose – and stopping for regular breaks along the way. For a flight, ferry or train ride, or longer journeys by car or coach, you'll need to plan a bit more carefully.

Air travel

Heightened airport security means that it's essential to plan ahead in order to avoid running into last-minute problems. Airport restrictions are subject to change, so contact your airline directly or call the Department for Transport's enquiry line on **0300 330 3000** for updates. Or, you can go to the travel and transport pages on the Directgov website at **www.gov.uk/browse/abroad**

Current security regulations state that liquid items are only permitted in hand luggage if they are in containers of less than 100ml. There are a few exceptions, including essential medicines for the length of your trip, which may be permitted in larger quantities above the current 100ml limit, but will be subject to authentication. Passengers are also

permitted to carry essential medical equipment through airport security, though all medication and equipment must be supported by documentation from a relevant qualified medical professional.

**Some countries
will need your
medication to be
in their original
packaging**

The Civil Aviation Authority states: "It is essential that diabetic passengers carry adequate equipment (glucose meters, lancets, batteries) and medication in their hand baggage. It is also important that insulin not being used in the flight is not packed in the hold baggage as this may be exposed to temperatures, which could degrade the insulin. In addition, there is also the potential that luggage may be lost en route."

Certain countries also require medicines to be accompanied by their original packaging and the pharmacy's pre-printed label giving your name and medication.

Testing your blood glucose levels

frequently is very important – the stress of the journey or sitting down for a long time can have an unpredictable effect on your diabetes control. Always carry fast-acting carbohydrates in case your blood glucose level drops and, if travelling alone, tell the flight stewards you have diabetes, in case you fall ill during the flight and need assistance. Alcohol is best avoided as it lowers blood glucose levels and makes hypos more likely.

Considerations when you're flying

1 Take a letter from your doctor or clinic, which explains that you have diabetes, the medication you use and all the equipment you need to treat diabetes, including insulin, insulin delivery devices, needles, blood glucose monitors, glucose tablets or liquid, and ketone test strips.

It would be helpful if the letter explains the need to carry all medications and equipment with you in your hand luggage and to avoid storing it in your luggage in the hold – problems will arise if luggage goes missing or your medication is spoiled. It would also be useful to take a recent prescription with you.

2 Before travelling, find out where you can get supplies of your medication at your destination, in case of emergency. For insulin, contact the manufacturer before the trip to see if your insulin is supplied in the country you are travelling to (see page 6 for contact details).

3 The Civil Aviation Authority's Advisory Health Unit recommends that people with diabetes should





Make sure you have plenty of snacks to hand when travelling

always contact their airline before travelling to discuss medical devices they intend to take on board the aircraft.

If you treat your diabetes with a pump or use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM), it's essential that you contact your airline prior to travel, if possible a few weeks before you fly. Some airlines will require you to notify them of your medical equipment in advance and fill in additional paperwork before you fly. Failure to do this can, in some cases, result in passengers not being allowed to board the aircraft with their pump or CGM. The caution around insulin pumps and CGM on board aircraft is due to wireless functionality, which may interfere with aircraft communication and navigation systems. If your pump or CGM can't function without a wireless signal, then you may need to be prepared to remove your CGM and pump and administer

insulin with an insulin pen for the journey. You will also need to test your blood glucose levels with a standard blood glucose meter.

You'll need documentation from a medical professional for any prescriptions

4 You should also speak to your diabetes team – if you need to remove your pump for any reason, they can provide you with any extra equipment such as insulin pens and help plan your doses throughout your journey. You can

ask for an airport card from some manufacturers, which gives technical details of the equipment, specifically for the purpose of airport security and cabin crew.

5 Cabin crew may ask for medication to be handed over for storage during the flight. Keep diabetes medication and equipment in the same bag to avoid anything being mislaid or lost.

6 Flights east or west often cross time zones. If you treat your diabetes with medication, this is something to discuss with your doctor or nurse beforehand. When travelling east, the day shortens, which may mean you need less diabetes medication, and when travelling west, the day lengthens, which can mean you need a little more.

On balance, it's better to have slightly higher blood glucose levels for a flight rather than lower, but your healthcare team will give you individual advice on this. Show them a detailed itinerary giving departure times, the duration of your flight and the local time of arrival.

7 Be aware that changes in air cabin pressure can affect insulin delivery. The reduction in ambient pressure when the plane is in ascent may lead to a slight increase in delivery of insulin, which could cause symptomatic hypoglycaemia. A slight reduction in insulin delivery is also possible during descent, so check your blood glucose levels more often.

For more information from the Civil Aviation Health Authority, go to www.caa.co.uk/aviationhealthunit or call **01293 573674**.

Insulin pumps: X-ray machines & full-body scanners

Some people using insulin pumps have problems when passing through security. The Civil Aviation Authority gives the following advice:

"There are a number of manufacturers of insulin pumps and unfortunately they do not all give the same advice. This varies from assurance that the pumps can safely go through any screening equipment, including X-ray equipment, to advice that the equipment may be affected by even the low-dose X-ray equipment used in some whole-body scanners."

"If you use an insulin pump, it is therefore important to contact the manufacturer of the particular pump that you use for advice. It is also sensible to contact your airline and the airports you will travel through, to find out their requirements if the manufacturer advises that your pump cannot go through some screening equipment."

For pumps that are not able to pass through body scanners, the advice is as follows:

"There are some airports where you will not be allowed to travel if you refuse to be scanned. It is therefore advisable to check with your airline and the airports you will be passing through to see if they do allow an alternative check."

Tablets

There's no restriction on the amount of tablets you can take through airport security, but you will still need to take documentation from a medical professional or your prescription for authentication.

Airline meals

Airlines can provide information on the times of most meals, so you can plan your insulin. It is best to order the standard meal, though this may not supply you with enough carbohydrate if you are on insulin or certain diabetes tablets. Cabin crew are usually able to provide fruit, crackers or rolls.

Hypo treatments

Glucose tablets, Lucozade and fluids used to treat hypos can be carried on board along with longer-acting carbohydrates like biscuits. If you have any problems buying glucose tablets or Lucozade after going through customs, remember any sugary non-diet drink, sugary sweets and fruit juice are good for treating hypos. Then, to prevent blood glucose from dropping again, follow with longer-acting carbohydrate, such as a sandwich, fruit or biscuits.

Snacks

On long flights, you may need snacks in between meals and at bedtime to prevent blood glucose levels going too low, so try to carry extra starchy carbohydrate foods, like biscuits, cereal bars or fruit buns, on board the aircraft. If you are on insulin, monitor your blood glucose levels frequently and be prepared to make changes to your dosage.

Ferries, trains & coaches

When travelling by coach, sea or rail, you're often confined to your means of transport, subject to scheduled stops and possible delays. Again, you need to carry all your medicines and equipment with you and make sure you have plenty of snacks in case food is delayed or unavailable.

If you're on your own, make sure you tell staff that you have diabetes, eg cruise staff, the train manager, or the tour representative and driver if it's a coach holiday.

TRAVEL TIP

See page 20 on how to avoid DVT

TRAVEL TIP

GPs often charge for a letter, so ask for it to be written in a way that it can be used more than once

Travel sickness?

You're no more prone to travel sickness than anyone else, but vomiting can upset your diabetes management. To reduce the risk of travel sickness:

- Avoid heavy or rich foods and all alcohol before travelling.
- Stick to healthy snacks, like plain biscuits, crackers or fruit.
- Don't read – this can make travel sickness worse. Try listening to music instead.
- Stop for regular breaks on car journeys and get fresh air from an open window.
- On a plane, ask for a seat over the wings where you're likely to have a smoother journey. On a boat, try to sit somewhere in the middle.
- If you feel unwell, check your blood glucose to make sure symptoms aren't at least partly due to being high or low.
- Some people find doing the following can ease the symptoms of travel sickness: sipping a glass of tepid water, ginger or peppermint (eg eating ginger biscuits, sucking on a mint, or drinking ginger or peppermint tea), or wearing special acupressure wristbands (available at most large chemists).
- More serious symptoms can be treated with medication, but mention your diabetes to the pharmacist. All travel sickness medicines work best when taken before symptoms appear.
- If you vomit, drink small amounts of water regularly to replace lost fluid and check your blood glucose level more often.

Enjoy Food



Helping families
with diabetes
shop, cook and eat



From serving up a delicious meal at the table to eating on the go, there's simple, practical advice for all families on any budget.

From your weekly food shop, to serving up a delicious meal at the table, there's simple, practical advice for all families on any budget. For everyone with diabetes, whether you're newly diagnosed, looking for family-friendly recipes or simply in need of new mealtime inspiration, we're here to help.



For inspiration, and to get started, go to
www.diabetes.org.uk/enjoyfood

Taste for travel

Part of going on holiday is about enjoying and indulging in local cuisine – not to mention letting someone else worry about the cooking and the washing-up. The diet for people with diabetes is the same healthy diet recommended for everyone, so you should be able to choose items from the usual menu while away from home

There's normally plenty of opportunity to try different foods when abroad – and there's no reason not to just because you have diabetes, but if you keep in mind the basics of healthy eating, you'll feel guilt-free.

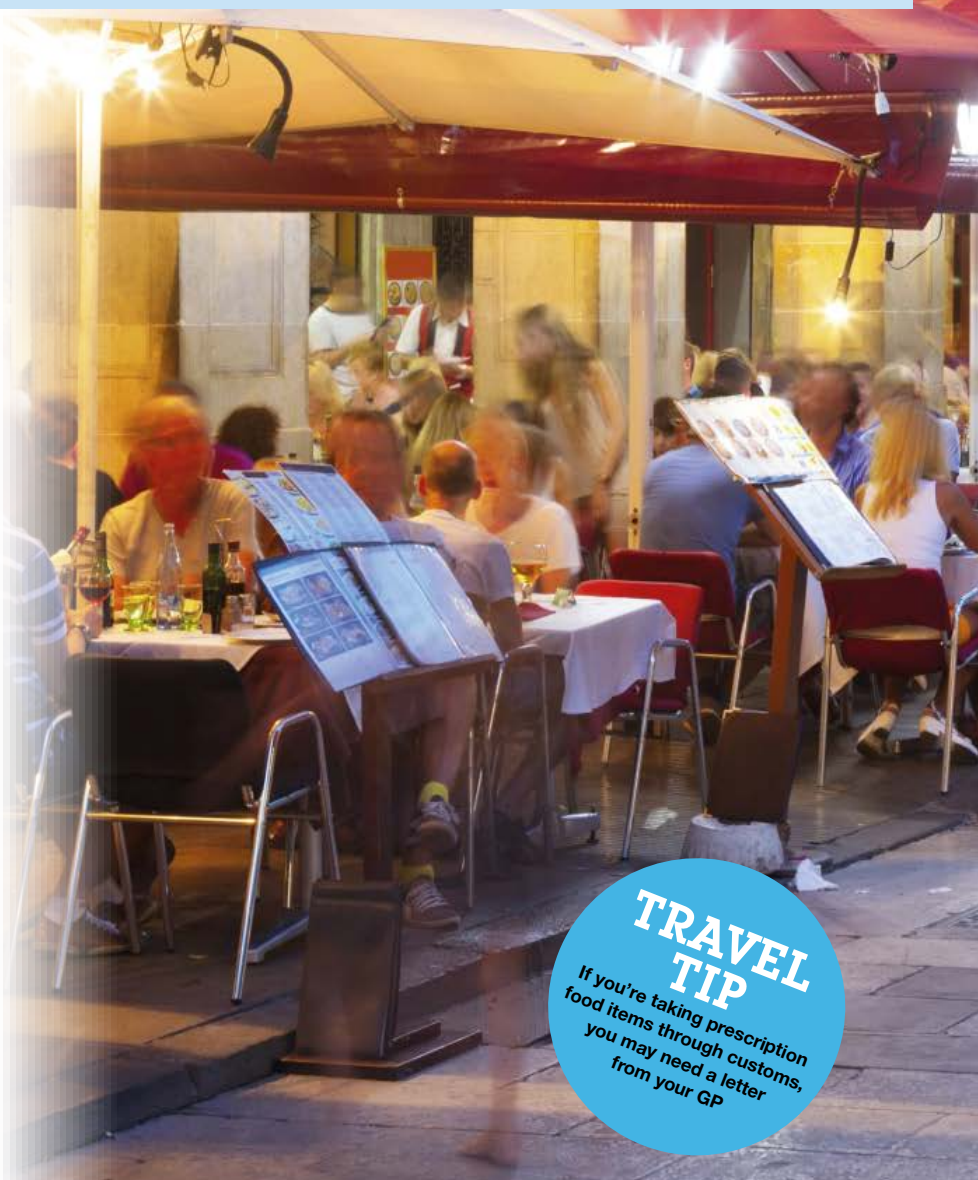
Since starchy carbohydrates are an important part of a healthy, balanced diet, it's worth knowing what carbohydrates will be available locally. Depending on where you go, this may be obvious in some cases, but outside of Europe, bread and potatoes aren't always so easy to find. If you carb count, refresh yourself on the carb content of common foods like rice and bread rolls.

A good travel guide will give you an idea of the cuisine available. It's also worth carrying a pocket dictionary or learning the words for a few basic foods.

You could also think about buying *Carbs & Cals Pocket Counter* (£6.99 from Amazon) or downloading the Carbs & Cals app (£3.99) for Android or iPhone. Both allow you to compare the food on your plate to the photos in the book or app, to quickly see the nutrients in your meal.

Allergies & intolerances

If you have food allergies or intolerances, try to find out the phrases for asking if foods are suitable for you. Allergy UK sells laminated translation cards in various languages – go to www.allergyuk.org/translation-cards or call 01322 619898. ➔



TRAVEL TIP

If you're taking prescription food items through customs, you may need a letter from your GP

Gluten-free products may not be readily available in some countries, so if you have coeliac disease, take plenty of gluten-free staples with you, eg bread, biscuits and crackers. For more on coeliac disease and travelling, go to www.coeliac.org.uk

Whatever food allergies or intolerances you have, if you're staying in a hotel ask well in advance whether they can cater for you. If you're eating out and are in any doubt whether food is suitable, stick to plain foods where you can clearly see what you're getting, like boiled potatoes, salads, meat, fish or plain rice.

Watch out!

Hot climates pose a greater risk of food poisoning, especially in countries where levels of sanitation aren't as high as you're used to. Food cooked hot to order is the safest option – be wary of anything that may have been left standing or reheated. Watching where local people eat, or asking for recommendations, is a good way of finding the most reputable eating places. If you're concerned about the safety of the local tap water, stick to bottled or sterilised. Remember to also avoid ice in drinks, salads that may have been washed in tap water and fruit that you can't peel.

Bottled water and sugar-free drinks are readily available in most places. When ordering tea or coffee, be aware that in some regions, including Turkey, Greece, North Africa, India and Pakistan, this is usually served sweetened. Try to find out



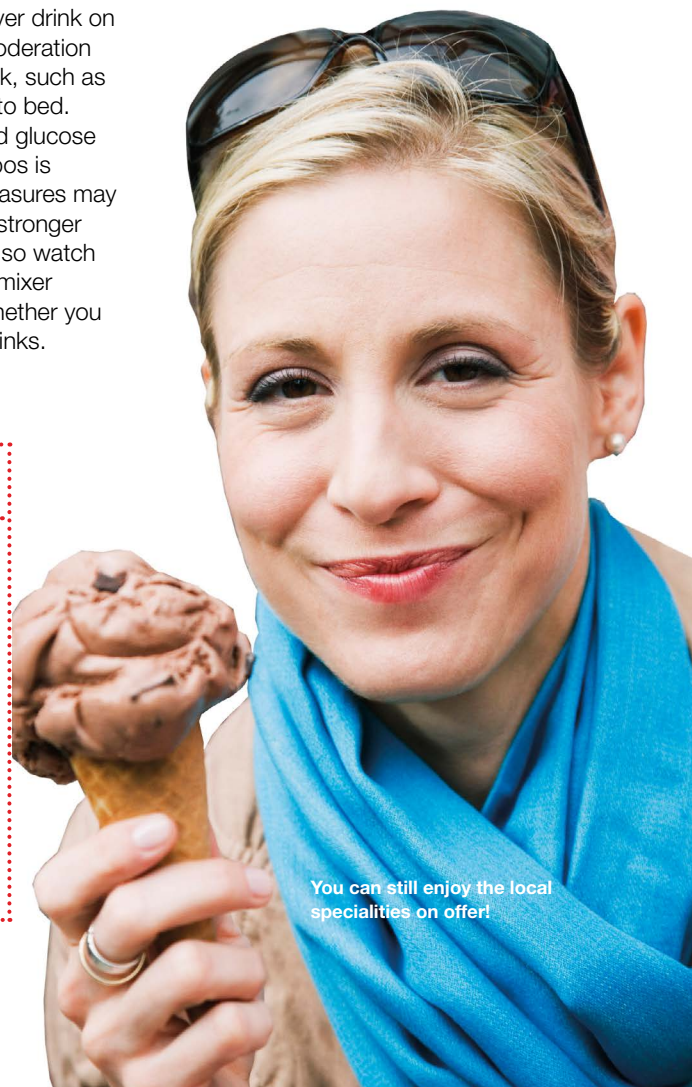
the phrase for asking for it without sugar.

If you're drinking alcohol, the same advice applies as at home: never drink on an empty stomach, drink in moderation and have a carbohydrate snack, such as toast or cereal, before you go to bed. Alcohol can really reduce blood glucose levels, so guarding against hypos is important. Remember that measures may be more generous and drinks stronger than you're used to in the UK, so watch your intake. Also, check what mixer drinks are being ordered, ie whether you are drinking diet or non-diet drinks.

Plan ahead!

If you need more advice on eating while travelling, ask to speak to a registered dietitian before your trip. They'll be able to help you:

- plan meals away from home
- make healthy choices when eating out
- work out portion sizes and carbohydrate amounts as accurately as possible
- discuss with other members of your healthcare team about any changes to your medication that may be needed to help you have good diabetes control while travelling.



You can still enjoy the local specialities on offer!

Sign up today as a Mobile Member to get expert advice on diabetes sent straight to your phone.

For just £3 a month, you'll receive tailored, expert advice to your phone and you'll be supporting our vital research into diabetes care, cure and prevention.

Receive the following benefits as a Mobile Member:

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- Full access to our other informative companion guides geared to your diabetes.
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Text **MANAGE** to **70002** to give **£3 a month**, and get expert advice on **Type 1 diabetes**.



Text **MEMBER** to **70002** to give **£3 a month**, and get expert advice on **Type 2 diabetes**.



Text **FAMILY** to **70002** to give **£3 a month**, and get expert advice on **childhood diabetes**.

For further details please go to
www.diabetes.org.uk/mobile-member

DIABETES UK
CARE. CONNECT. CAMPAIGN.

healthnotes

Under the weather?

It's never nice being ill, but on holiday it can be a whole lot more miserable, especially if you're worried about where to get help or advice

The first thing to do is check your insurance policy before you go so you know exactly what you're covered for. The NHS has advice on state-provided healthcare in different countries at www.nhs.uk/healthcareabroad

Your tour operator or hotel manager should be able to help you find a doctor, if necessary. Make sure the doctor knows about your diabetes and tell them the generic names for all the medications you're taking.

Keep all receipts or proofs of purchase for any treatment or medication you pay for upfront, so you can claim back from your insurance provider at a later date or get a reimbursement under the terms of the EHIC.

As a last resort, you can always contact British consular officials, who may be able to arrange – at a cost – to get you back to the UK for treatment.

Sick day rules

Remember, when you are ill, your blood glucose levels may be disrupted. Follow the normal 'sick day' rules:

- Test your blood glucose levels more often. At least four times a day and also during

the night if you have Type 1 diabetes. If you have Type 2 diabetes, talk to your healthcare team about how often you may need to test.

- With Type 1 diabetes, if blood glucose levels are 15mmol/l or more, test your blood or urine for ketones.

- Continue taking your diabetes medication, even if you're not eating, and adjust the dose depending on test results. If you're unsure how to do this, talk to your healthcare team before you go.

- Drink plenty of sugar-free drinks, at least five pints per day.

- If you're being sick or don't feel like solid food, take carbohydrate-containing drinks such as milk, fruit juice, Complan/Build Up and drinking chocolate, or sugary drinks such as Lucozade, ordinary cola or lemonade.

- Try to eat little and often, even if you don't feel like it, and stick to plain foods like rice, bread, potatoes, plain biscuits or crackers.

- Contact a doctor if your blood glucose levels remain continuously high, you have ketones in your blood or urine, you're vomiting and unable to keep anything down, or if you are simply unsure what to do.

TRAVEL TIP

If you get a prescription for insulin overseas, make sure it's the strength that you're used to



Remember to test your blood glucose more often when you are ill

Know your numbers

If you talk to any healthcare professionals while you're abroad, be aware that in some countries blood glucose levels are measured in milligrams per 100 millilitres (mg/dl), rather than the millimoles per litre (mmol/l) used here in the UK. Make sure you're not talking at cross-purposes – here's a conversion chart to help:



	mmol/l	mg/dl	mmol/l	mg/dl
1	18	11	198	
2	36	12	216	
3	54	13	234	
4	72	14	252	
5	90	15	270	
6	108	16	288	
7	126	17	306	
8	144	18	324	
9	162	19	343	
10	180	20	360	

Young children are more likely to get prickly heat



Common holiday woes

1 Stomach upsets

To help avoid tummy bugs, follow sensible precautions – like washing your hands before eating and after going to the bathroom, and choosing safe food and drink. If tap water is unsafe to drink, remember it's also unsafe for cleaning your teeth. Keep your fluid levels up by drinking plenty of water, but little and often – a large amount in one go might make you vomit. Oral rehydration sachets give the right balance of water, salt and sugar, and should be part of your travel first-aid pack.

2 Prickly heat/heat rash

This is a red, itchy rash that can happen when you sweat a lot in a hot or humid climate. Calamine lotion can soothe the skin and antihistamines (creams or medicines) may relieve the itch. These should both be available from pharmacies without a prescription. To avoid prickly heat or lessen symptoms, wear loose clothing and stay as cool as possible, making use of cool showers and air-conditioned environments.


Young children are more likely to get prickly heat as their sweat glands are not as well developed.

3 Heat exhaustion

This is when the body finds it difficult to keep cool. Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, muscle cramps, stomach cramps and pale skin. As some of these could also be due to unstable blood glucose levels, it's important to check your blood glucose. Heat exhaustion needs immediate treatment: move to a cool place to rest and sip a cool drink. If left untreated, it can lead to the more severe and life-threatening condition, heat stroke. Symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, hallucinations, rapid breathing and convulsions, and it requires immediate medical treatment.



AND HOW TO BEAT THEM!



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Sport & activities

Any physical activity will affect blood glucose levels

Although some of us are content to lie by the pool all holiday, many people pick their destinations because of the activities they offer.

People with diabetes can, and do, take part in all sorts of activities, but it's important to mention your diabetes when you book – occasionally you may find restrictions in place or certain requirements you need to meet.

If you have problems finding somewhere that will allow you to take part, try getting advice from the national body for your sport of choice – usually a quick internet search will bring up their details. Make sure that your travel insurance policy specifically includes the sports you want to try, eg water sports or skiing.

Any physical activity has a direct effect on your blood glucose levels. Be aware of the risks and be rigorous about testing your blood glucose levels while taking part in any kind of sport.

The people with you need to know about your condition and how to help, should you need any help. If you are at risk of hypos, make sure you have hypo treatments close to hand.

Watch out for hot & cold

Long periods of sunbathing on the beach can affect your diabetes control, making blood glucose levels higher than normal.

On the flipside, insulin will be absorbed more quickly from the injection site in hot weather and this increases the risk of hypos. You'll need to monitor your levels more often and be ready to adjust your diet or insulin dose accordingly. Be wary of misleading test results – extremes of temperature may affect the accuracy of your meter. Another thing to consider, if your levels are higher, is whether your insulin could have been damaged by the heat.

In hot countries, the biggest health threat is the sun, so keep covered. Wear long sleeves, loose trousers, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with a UV400 label. For areas of the body left

exposed, including the backs of your hands and feet, you need a high factor sunscreen – see 'How to... understand suncreams', page 20).

The sun is at its most intense in the middle of the day, so this is a good time to seek out a shady place or go indoors. We're all more likely to dehydrate in hot weather, but this becomes more of a risk if blood glucose levels are raised, so drinking plenty of sugar-free fluids is vital.

Take particular care of your feet if you have neuropathy – numbness in your feet can mean you're not aware skin is burning. Protect them from the sun with socks or sunscreen, and wear well-fitting sandals on the beach, so they don't burn on the hot sand.

Cold climates

In cold weather, insulin is absorbed more slowly at first, but can then be absorbed

suddenly when you warm up later in the day, which could cause a hypo. As your body also uses up more energy staying warm, eg by shivering, this can lead to hypos, too.

Hypos are more dangerous in cold conditions – they interfere with your body's attempts to stay warm and increase the risk of hypothermia – so guarding against them is really important.

As with hot climates, remember your meter may not be accurate in cold conditions.

If you suffer from poor circulation or have neuropathy, it's particularly important to prevent frostbite, as numbness in your feet can mean you don't feel the cold.



Can I... avoid DVT?

Far-flung holiday destinations mean a fair amount of travelling and, when you're sitting still for long periods of time, the risk of developing a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a blood clot that forms in the deep vein of the leg, becomes higher. Clots can develop for a number of reasons, but when blood passes more slowly through the vein, which is what can happen on a flight, it can make it more likely. But, there are ways you can reduce your risk when taking to the skies:

- Ask your GP or healthcare team if flight socks are suitable for you. They give support to your legs, but must be worn correctly – if not, they can restrict blood flow and lead to more problems.
- During the flight, don't cross your legs – and don't stay seated the whole time. Make sure you get up and walk around regularly.
- While sitting, tense and relax the muscles in your legs at regular intervals, and move your feet around.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration – this will help to keep your circulation healthy.

Symptoms of a DVT in leg veins include feeling pain, tightness, swelling, tenderness and discolouration – often a dusky blue-red. Symptoms usually develop after the flight (you need to get medical advice straight away), but if you do have any signs of DVT while on the plane, explain your symptoms to a flight attendant, who will help you until you can be properly treated.

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How to... understand suncreams

UVA STAR RATING

Suncreams have a rating of 0–5 stars for the level of protection they offer against UVA rays, which are the dominant tanning rays. A tan is actually the result of injury to the skin's DNA – the skin darkens in an imperfect attempt to prevent further DNA damage. UVA rays are present during daylight hours all year round, and can penetrate clouds and glass. They play a major part in skin ageing and wrinkling, and also contribute to, and may even cause, the development of skin cancers. Always choose a suncream with four stars or more, and apply it generously and often when you're in the sun.

SUN PROTECTION FACTOR (SPF)

This rating is measured by timing how long skin that is covered with suncream takes to burn compared with unprotected skin. For example, SPF15 means it should take 15 times longer to burn when wearing the suncream. The higher the SPF the better, but you should at least apply an SPF30 suncream, which also has a high UVA protection (when UVA rating is four or five stars).

UVB rays play a key part in the development of skin cancer and a contributory role in tanning and wrinkling.

WATERPROOF?

Suncreams only work if you use enough, so apply plenty and reapply regularly, as it's easily rubbed, washed or sweated off. Even suncreams that claim to be 'water resistant' should be reapplied after you've been in the water. It's also safer to reapply suncreams that claim to provide protection after just one application, as you might accidentally miss areas that may then get burnt.



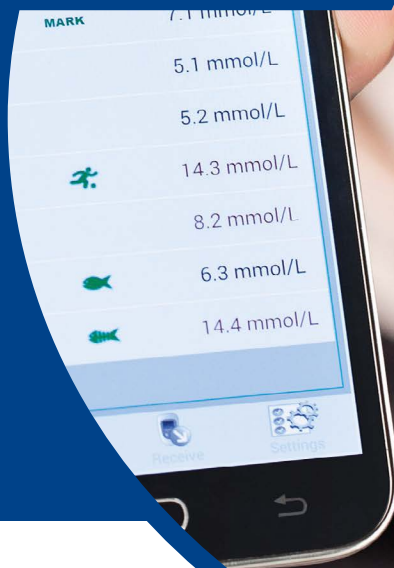
TRAVEL TIP

Wear a hat, T-shirt and sunglasses, and seek shade between 11am–3pm

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Achieving your dreams

Globe-trotting adventurer **Roly Smith** has never let his Type 1 diabetes get in the way of his travels

I can still vividly remember the depression I felt when I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes 12 years ago. Then, in a more rational moment, I reflected on the life of Olympic champion rower Sir Steve Redgrave, an insulin-dependent diabetic, who went on to win five consecutive gold medals. I read a quote from Sir Steve in which he said: "I made the decision that diabetes was going to live with me; I wasn't going to live with it. There's no reason why you can't achieve your dreams."

If it was good enough for Sir Steve, then it was good enough for me. I resolved that once my diabetes was under control, I was not going to let it stop me from doing anything – or from going anywhere. And so, even after the additional setback of a brush with prostate cancer, I haven't. I still enjoy my passion of walking, particularly hill walking in the British hills, and as past-president of the Outdoor Writers' and Photographers' Guild, and

a long-standing member of the British Guild of Travel Writers, I get many chances to visit some fairly remote and inaccessible places.

Trips to remember

In recent years, I've been on several trips to the American West, including around 30 of their magnificent National Parks and wilderness areas, including Yellowstone, Yosemite and the Grand Canyon. Most recently I visited the still-Wild West of Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming (see 'Go west', November–December 2013 *balance*).

I've seen the first rays of the sun to touch the shores of the USA from the granite summit of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park in Maine, and watched the breathtaking majesty of the universe of stars on a midnight hike into the depths of the hoodoo-haunted Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah.

I have explored Canada from sea to shining sea, including the Pacific Coast of Canada, Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast, as well as Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick on the Atlantic coast.

And, we made several visits to the Canadian Rockies while our daughter Claire lived in Calgary, including an all-day ascent to the remote Burgess Shale quarry in Yoho National Park, where some of the earliest forms of life on Earth have been found, and hikes from Lake Louise and Emerald Lake.

Other trips have included Norway and an ascent of the vertiginous Preikestolen rock hanging over the Lyesfjord; to Bergen, Lyngen and Tromsø, and crossing the Arctic Circle for some glacier walking in Spitsbergen, a few hundred miles from the North Pole. Walking trips have



Roly has been on some amazing adventures around the world

included the Julian Alps in Slovenia and the Arran Islands off the west coast of Ireland.

Holidays with pals in the 'Escape Committee' of former colleagues from the Peak District National Park have ranged from the blistering heat of the Jordanian desert, including Petra, to chilly Iceland, to view the eruption of the unpronounceable Eyjafjallajökull volcano, which brought most of Europe's air traffic to a halt in 2010.

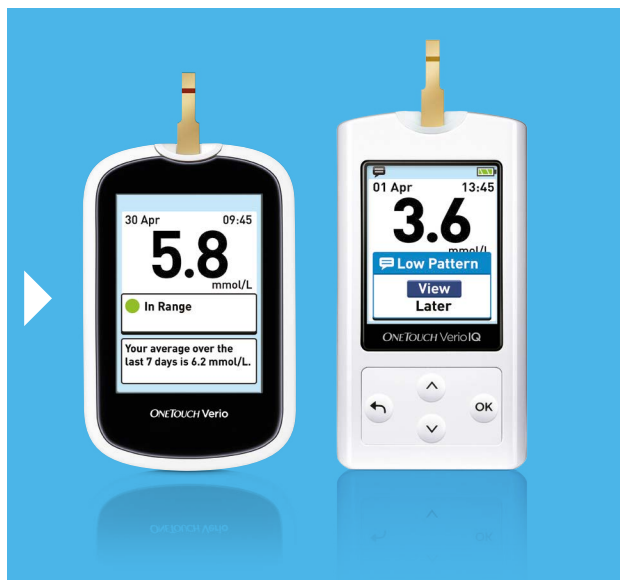
Always remember, taking regular physical exercise is good for your condition – and for your soul. If you just take sensible precautions, you should be fine.

My hope would be that my experiences will encourage other people with diabetes not to let their condition stop them from having similar adventures. So, what are you waiting for? Get out there and enjoy our wonderful world!

Roly's travelling tips

- Listen to your body; if you feel a bit 'under', do something about it before it becomes a problem.
- Carry a pack of high-energy glucose tablets with you wherever you go, in case you go low.
- Keep a check on your levels so you know how you are doing.
- Make sure someone in your party knows that you are diabetic.
- Keep your insulin with you at all times, in a suitable cool container.
- On long-haul flights, make sure your insulin regime is linked to the in-flight meals.

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Ask the experts

* PLEASE NOTE: THE EXPERTS CANNOT TAKE PHONE CALLS. ** CALLS MAY BE RECORDED FOR TRAINING AND QUALITY PURPOSES.



Karen
Therapist & counsellor

MIND THE GAP

My 19-year-old daughter is planning a gap year around the world before she starts university. I'd be worried sick regardless, but as she has Type 1 diabetes, I'm even more nervous about it. She looks after herself, and her group of friends are mature and sensible, but I can't help but think how vulnerable she will be on her travels. I really want her to enjoy it, how can she – and I – prepare for it?

Susan, West Bromwich

Libby says...

It's always worrying when children are away from home (no matter how grown up they are!), but when they are going away for a long time and they have a health condition, it can be even more worrying. It's good that you feel reassured by your daughter's and friends' maturity – asking them to keep in contact regularly can only help you feel more at ease.

Many people with diabetes travel the world without any problems. Reading this guide is a good start to help you and your daughter plan for this trip, but she will need to see her healthcare team straight away. They will need to check her diabetes control and will also give her detailed advice on what she will need to do in terms of diabetes supplies and extra medication, etc.

Perhaps you could go along to the appointment too to help your daughter for her trip and to raise and resolve any concerns you have.



Libby
Paediatric diabetes specialist nurse



Tracy
Head of Care



Dougie
Dietitian

DRIVING DILEMMA

We want to get a hire car when we go to Spain later this year – do I need to worry about diabetes? I have Type 2, which I also treat with insulin. I have a UK driving licence but wondered if there could be a problem?

Jeff, Barnsley

Tracy says...

If you are planning to drive while on holiday, you should make sure that your driving licence is valid for the duration of your trip and that you are covered by your travel insurance policy for driving, especially when abroad.

Remember to check that your insurance covers you for your diabetes – many don't cover pre-existing medical conditions.

When you're on the road, just follow the same rules as you do when driving in the UK, but be aware that the hotter weather may affect your glucose levels differently. Safe driving tips include avoiding delaying or missing meals and snacks, taking breaks on long journeys, and keeping hypo treatments to hand in the car. For more details about driving with diabetes, go to www.diabetes.org.uk/driving

WORRIED SICK

A few years ago I became ill on holiday and needed hospital treatment. It wasn't diabetes-related, but my diabetes was poorly managed while I was there and I ended up having lots of severe hypos, and my recovery was slower than it should have been.

I haven't been on holiday since. I want to book something, but I'm worried about the same thing happening.

Dot, Pembrokeshire

Karen says...

I'm sorry that you had such an unpleasant experience – and while you were on holiday, too. It may help you to talk to your healthcare team and family about your worries to seek some reassurance about your health and the measures you can take

to avoid becoming ill on holiday. Of course, you will need to make sure you have adequate travel insurance, too.

Go to www.diabetes.org.uk/illness for more information on how to manage diabetes when you are ill and what to expect during a stay at hospital.

DIABETES UK CARELINE

To speak to a
trained counsellor, call
0345 123 2399**,
Monday to Friday,
9am to 7pm, or email
careline@diabetes.org.uk

CRUISE CONTROL

I'm going on a Caribbean cruise next year with extended family. Do I need to tell the holiday company in advance that I have Type 1 diabetes and ask about food choices? And will I need to request a fridge in my room?

Owain, Cardiff

Dougie says...

As with any holiday, it's best to tell the tour operator about certain medical conditions that you have. This is simply so that if you did need any help when on your trip, the tour operator would have been given advance notice about your condition.

Going on a cruise itself shouldn't cause any



problems with your diabetes – making sure you have a fridge in your cabin in advance will help – they may also give you a sharps box to use. Food-wise, you should be spoilt for choice! There's no reason why you can't enjoy all the food that's on offer while on your cruise – there should be a lot of healthy choices, too, to keep your diet balanced and varied.

THE COSTS MOUNT UP!

I've just returned from a cruise around the Mediterranean. As always, when travelling, I was well prepared and did my research. Seeing that it's a good idea to carry a letter from my doctor explaining that I need to take needles and lancets with me abroad, so that I can manage my diabetes, I approached my GP. I was shocked when I was charged £40 for this. However, I was never once asked to show this letter when travelling. So, is it really necessary to carry this? I am lucky enough to go away two or three times a year, so this cost will soon stack up.

James, Newbury

Karen says...

I can certainly understand how frustrating this is. The cost of a letter for travel can vary hugely and we have heard from people who were asked to pay anything from £10 to £80 by their GP. There's no standard price for this and GPs can charge as they see fit for their time.

Although you weren't asked to show a letter when you travelled on this occasion, it's not possible to predict whether you'll have to in the future. It would be awful if you were refused on board a flight because you were unable to show such a letter.

Remember to check that your insurance covers you for your diabetes

You could ask your doctor to write the letter in such a way that it can be reused, instead of having a new one for each trip. Or, before your departure date, you could ask your agent whether your travel company requires a letter or not, as they may be happy to view a print-out of your repeat prescription list, instead.

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DIFFERENT TYPE MARI WILSON

Travellin' light

“I’m touring my new show, *Ready Steady Girls*, at the moment, which means I’m living out of a suitcase. It’s handy that hotels almost always have a fridge for me to store my insulin – even if it means I have to eat the contents of said fridge to make room!

Every day on the road is a big challenge when it comes to food. It’s tricky as being on insulin means I have to make sure I keep ‘topped up’ by eating regularly, but because I also have coeliac disease, I can’t top up like the rest of the band with fish and chips, sausage rolls or Belgian buns (mind you the thought of a Belgian bun is rather appealing). When arriving at the venue, often there are lovely sandwiches waiting for

us, but of course they’re no good to me unless they’re gluten-free, which is rarely the case.

There’s
nothing better
than a good
old-fashioned
paper list to
ensure stress-
free happy
travels

On the day of the show, I like to eat around 4 or 5 o’clock, so I have plenty of time to digest before singing – it’s no good performing on a full stomach, believe me, and when the sound check isn’t

done till an hour before the show, the last thing I’ll want is a curry! I like to have my ‘quiet time’ in the dressing room, doing my hair and make-up, warming up my voice, checking Facebook and sending the odd tweet and not worrying about being hungry or having a hypo. So, my latest thing is that I bring homemade gluten-free sandwiches or a lovely healthy salad in one of my trusty 35-year-old Tupperware containers (yes, I was known as Miss Tupperware 1981). That only works for the first day, though, and I am forever thankful that supermarkets and some coffee houses are now starting to have a gluten-free option.

It’s also a good idea to just throw a gluten-free loaf in the suitcase, together with the chamomile tea, of course – what a rock chick I am! Lesson learnt: Buy more cases and handbags (any excuse!).

Every year I travel to and from Los Angeles. Just after 9/11, the security was extremely tight and I had to carry a doctor’s letter to prove

that the needle in my hand luggage was only for medical reasons. As it’s such a long journey, I can pre-order the in-flight meal. However, you can only tick one box on the form – Gluten Free, Vegetarian, Vegan, etc. There’s no box for ‘Gluten-free vegetarian’, like me! So, I can either tick the vegetarian option and end up with a bowl of vegetarian pasta (full of gluten) or the gluten-free option and be served a steak – aargh! Are you reading this, Mr Branson?

So, travelling for me means always planning ahead and being an avid list-compiler. I love nothing more than writing out a checklist and then going through it all before I leave. I always have mine ready and waiting on the kitchen table written in big black permanent marker so I can’t miss it.

My husband just can’t understand why I don’t put it all on my iPhone, but for me there’s nothing better than a good old-fashioned paper list to ensure stress-free, happy travels. ”

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- www.diabetes.org.uk/12p
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Various dates

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