

Travel Tips

For People with Cystic Fibrosis Living in Ireland



Getting the chance to travel and visit new places is an opportunity that should not be passed up. It is important to take the time to get away and experience a holiday, whether it be a weekend get-away or an extended trip. A person with cystic fibrosis (CF) can travel, but they will have to take the extra precautions when planning their journey.

Here are a few handy tips to consider when making your preparations;

Note: Foreign travel insurance is dealt with in a separate Cystic Fibrosis Ireland leaflet: 'Travel Insurance for People with CF Living in Ireland'.



Talk to Your CF TEAM

It is important to talk to your CF team well in advance of booking a trip. They can give you advice on whether you are healthy enough to travel. Your CF team can also advise you about the practicalities of going on holiday and provide you with any health-related documentation which you may require.



Choose Your Destination with CARE



It is wise to choose a destination that has a relatively good health care system, ideally with comprehensive CF care delivered via specialised CF centres. Before leaving, make sure to obtain information on the local CF centres and hospitals. A full list of all of the available CF care centres worldwide can be found at the Cystic Fibrosis Worldwide website.

Obtain Required Health & Travel DOCUMENTS

Health-related travel documents are great to keep on-hand to avoid hassles when crossing the border. The following information would prove useful to have: A list of your medications (trade and generic names) and a description of why you need each one and a letter from your CF Centre or consultant explaining your diagnosis, medicine and equipment.



Prepare Your Medical Devices & Medication

When preparing for your trip, it is important that you pack all the necessary medication and devices that you will need, along with the associated prescriptions. It would be highly advisable to bring extra medication in the rare case that your flight is delayed or your luggage gets lost or stolen. Be aware that some medications, particularly new therapies such as Kalydeco and Orkambi are issued on a monthly basis. If you require additional stock due to travel, be sure to order these from your pharmacist in advance.

Additionally, you should bring a whole extra jar of enzymes in case you decide to eat some meals that are fatter than you normally eat, while abroad.



You should also always have a stand-by antibiotic with you on holidays. Some antibiotics will make you more sensitive to the sun so you will need to be extra careful and use high factor sun block and cover up at the highest temperatures. It is worth investigating whether it is possible for you to get the cost of high factor sun block reimbursed by the HSE if you can obtain a letter from your consultant stating why you need it.

Make sure that you keep all your medications in their original containers with clear labels. Liquid medications should be stored in clear zip-lock bags. If liquid medications are over 100ml a doctor's letter will be required.

When travelling, do not check-in any of your medication or equipment, but rather keep it in your carry-on luggage so that it is available to you at all times. It is worth noting that with some airlines any medical devices and medication are excluded from the regular carry-on allowance. Please note that this process can take months to organise and may result in additional documentation being required by the airline. Check with the airline prior to travel on guidelines.



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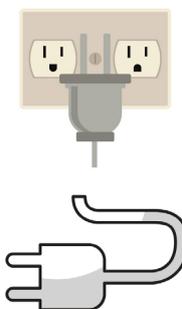
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Prepare for Arrival at the Airport & Hotel

Inform officials of your medications and medical devices before arriving in the airport to make things go as smoothly as possible. Allow additional time for security in case there are any issues.

Ensure that arrangements are in place with the airline and your hotel concerning the refrigeration of certain medications. Ensure that you have the necessary adaptor plugs and plug boards so that you can operate all of your medical devices while you are abroad. It is important to note that in some countries the voltage is not the same as in Ireland and may not be powerful enough to mist nebulisers or too powerful and blow the nebuliser.



Address Your Supplemental OXYGEN Needs

During a flight, the higher elevation results in a decrease in oxygen concentration levels, making it harder for poorly functioning lungs to breathe. Always contact your airline if you need to take oxygen during the flight. Each airline has its own policy for oxygen transport and in-flight usage.



Airlines usually require the patient to carry a prescription for oxygen at all times. Many have their own airline-specific medical form that the doctor or consultant must complete. These are usually valid for one year and should include information on the passengers' fitness to travel and his or her ability to operate the oxygenation device and respond appropriately to its alarms.

The phases of the flight during which oxygen is medically necessary (taxi, take-off, cruise and landing) should be specified. Some airlines supply oxygen for free or allow you to carry a compressor aboard as part of your hand luggage, while others charge hundreds of euros for supplying it.

Since many carriers charge such a fee for supplemental oxygen, the insurance provider of the individual with CF should be contacted in advance to determine coverage for oxygen needs while travelling. Furthermore, the patient must contact local providers for oxygen use during any stopovers and at the final destination.

General TIPS:

Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently and bring alcohol based waterless hand sanitiser.



Make sure to keep cleaning and sterilising your nebs. Dry and cover your nebs with paper towels. Some people bring a small baby bottle steriliser to clean and store nebs.

Beware of showerheads! Reports have found that cepacia and other bad bacteria tend to grow inside the warm moist environment of a showerhead.



Avoid food from unreliable sources such as street stalls and unpasteurised products.

Drink plenty of water and avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol consumption as PWCF are more susceptible to dehydration.



Bring a CF ID card in your wallet. These can be obtained from CF Ireland.

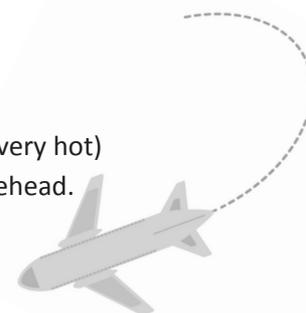
Ensure you have travel insurance and your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) in place before travelling abroad. Bring a copy of your travel insurance policy with you to ensure you have access to contact details and the policy number should any emergencies arise.



Put a small First Aid Bag Together.

This could include;

- * Motilium
- * Imodium
- * Pain killers
- * Antiseptic cream
- * Insect bite cream
- * Plasters
- * Dioralyte (hydration)
- * Salt tablets (if going somewhere very hot)
- * A thermometer strip for your forehead.



Plan ahead, be prepared, and – most importantly – have a great trip!

Please note this document is for information purpose only and does not does not represent any endorsement by CFI.