

SECTION 8: ASTHMA AND TRAVEL THE ASTHMA HANDBOOK



If you travel and you have asthma, these suggestions may be helpful:

Take enough medication to last the entire time you are away and allow for increases due to flare-ups and travel delays. Take an extra prescription's worth in case of loss or theft.

If you travel on a plane, keep your rescue medication (blue puffer) close at hand in case you need it. Airplanes contain many things that can trigger breathing problems, such as perfume and other strong smells. Don't store it in the overhead bin!

Keep medication in the original containers with your name on the prescription label. Sometimes pharmacists put the medication label on the outside of the puffer's box, instead of on the puffer itself. If your puffer is not labelled, ask your pharmacist for a label before you travel.

Make sure you are booked on smoke-free transport (plane, train, rental car, bus or boat) and always ask for a smoke-free room where you are staying.

If you are traveling outside of Canada, ask your pharmacist for a printout of your medications and/or ask your doctor for a letter identifying your prescriptions.

If you travel outside of your province, make sure you have enough medical insurance in case of an emergency.

If you are using a nebulizer to take your medications, make sure that the country that you are visiting has the same electrical voltage as Canada. If not, speak to the supplier where you bought the nebulizer. They can give you an adaptor or you can rent a suitable nebulizer.

If you don't already have one, ask your doctor for an asthma action plan in case you have problems while you are away.

Never stop taking your medication, even when you feel better.

If you have lost or finished your medication while away, go to the nearest reputable health-care centre as advised by your travel agency, insurance company or doctor.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BRINGING MEDICATIONS ON PLANES

New carry-on baggage rules affect inhaled and liquid medications. If you use inhalers and liquid medication, you need to pay special attention to the new rules for carry-on baggage.

According to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA):

- Liquid prescription medicine is allowed as long as it is clearly labelled with a name that matches the passenger's ticket/boarding pass.
- Other essential non-prescription liquid medicines are also allowed and are exempt from the container size restrictions. In addition, they are not required to be in a plastic bag.

Check the CATSA website (www.catsa-acsta.gc.ca) before you leave, in case the rules change.