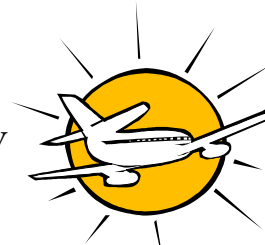


Travel & Chronic Lung Disease

Living With COPD

There is no reason to miss out on some of the good things in life. With determination and good medical advice you can do many enjoyable and necessary activities. This includes traveling.



The success and enjoyment from traveling is directly related to your preparation *before* stepping on the plane, train, bus, ship or driving the car.

Consultation With Your Physician

It is important to discuss your traveling plans with your doctor. You should tell him/her:

- Where you plan to go
- How long you plan to be away
- If you are going by yourself or with someone else
- How you have been feeling over the past few months

Your doctor will be able to give you sound medical advice regarding your treatment regime during your travels. Your doctor may prescribe changes in your daily therapy.

Obtain from your doctor:

- A copy of a brief medical history report.
- An updated medication schedule. Take along enough medications to last the entire length of the vacation including extra in case of an increase in dosage.
- A list of recommended physicians where you'll be. If traveling overseas, you can contact the IAMAT (International Association of Medical Assistance to Travelers). This non-profit world-wide association has English-speaking doctors ready to aid the international traveler. Avoid areas where there is inadequate or questionable medical help.

Before You Leave

- Ensure you have adequate insurance wherever you travel, particularly when traveling out of country.

- Locate nearby hospitals/clinics and their hours of operations.
- Familiarize yourself with the emergency services available (9-1-1)
- Obtain the name of a contact person to service equipment.
- Request non-smoking areas for travel, accommodation and restaurants.

Special Considerations

Infection - Head colds, chest colds and influenza are common infections. If you experience chills, fever, increase in cough and wheeze, this may be a sign that you have an infection. An important sign of trouble is when the phlegm you spit up turns from white to yellow, grey or green and gets thick and hard to raise.

Things to do:

- It is often difficult to avoid people who have known respiratory infections; however, precautions should be taken.
- Make sure you've had your influenza vaccine.
- If your doctor thinks it appropriate, have a filled prescription of antibiotics with you. Make sure you know when and how to use them.

Air Pollutants - Any pollutants in the air can aggravate breathing problems. Emissions from factories, automobile exhausts and smoke in the environment can be a trigger.

Things to do:

- Call ahead and get air quality information in cities you plan to visit.
- Travel during the non-rush hours.
- Avoid smoky environments.
 - ✓ Ensure your means of travel has smoke-free areas.
 - ✓ Ask for a non-smoking accommodation, and ask if low scented cleaning agents are used.
 - ✓ Ask for non-smoking eating areas.

Climate Changes - Severe changes in humidity or temperature can bother some people.

Things to do:

- Call ahead and find out the general climate conditions.
- Excessive cold or very hot weather may cause difficulty.
- Inquire if air conditioning is available for very warm climates.

Allergy - Some people with chronic obstructive lung disease have allergies. These are generally to molds, dust, pollens, animal dander and some foods.

Things to do:

- Recognize allergies. Avoidance is the most effective method of dealing with allergies. This, however, may be more difficult when you are away from home.
- If your hotel room has dust or mold, ask to be moved.
- Bring your own pillow or ask for a non-feather pillow and comforter.
- Avoid tours that may expose you to environmental factors that bother you.
- If you have any food allergies, always ask if you are unsure of the food or the methods used to cook the food.
- Make sure there are no sulfites used in salad preparation at your restaurant of choice.
- Bring your own snacks.

Specific Needs

Medication - Always keep your medication with you, along with a list of your medications, strength and dosage. Always take extra medications.

Equipment - If you are using a compressor for aerosol delivery of medication, it may be convenient to have a portable compressor that runs on a rechargeable battery or an adapter that can be used in a car cigarette lighter. These are available to purchase or rent from oxygen companies. Adapters are also available to convert wattage when operating a compressor for overseas trips (available from Radio Shack).

If you are traveling any way other than car, it is always **NECESSARY** to make arrangements prior to leaving regarding the use of respiratory equipment. There is generally no problem but arrangements must be made ahead of time.

If traveling by air, it is advisable to carry a note from your physician covering inhalation therapy equipment, with perhaps a picture, to avoid confusion or unnecessary alarm at security inspections.

If you are using nebulized medication, nebulizers (unit dose) are often much more convenient than mixing or pouring your own.

Remember to allow yourself extra time to use the equipment.

Oxygen - If you are using supplemental oxygen it is important that you:

1. **Consult your physician** - The FDA prohibits the dispensing of medical oxygen without a prescription because it is considered a drug, you will need a copy of your oxygen prescription.

2. **Estimate your average oxygen usage** - it is important that you develop a chart or schedule of oxygen use. This “schedule” will assure that you plan for the needed supply of oxygen. YOUR LOCAL OXYGEN SUPPLIER SHOULD BE CONTACTED TO OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION.
3. **Plan your route around refill points** - find out from your local oxygen suppliers the names of the distributors where you’re traveling. Make sure you, or your O2 supplier, call the dealer prior to beginning your trip.

Reimbursement rates may be different; you may have to pay cash for refills en route and wait until you return home to submit an insurance claim.

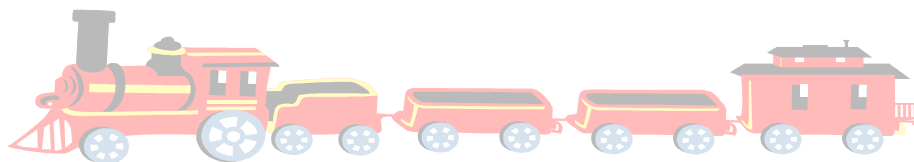
4. **Be Safety Conscious** - always re-read your patient operating instructions booklet. This contains some safety suggestions that you and everyone traveling with you should be aware of.

Modes Of Traveling And Oxygen Use - There are no universal or standard rules or regulations governing patients who require supplemental oxygen during travel by car, train, bus, camper or airline travel. It is ALWAYS ADVISABLE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS PRIOR TO TRAVELING. Talk to the reservation clerk about your situation so that any special arrangements can be made before your scheduled departure.

Car or Camper Travel - Generally speaking, if you are traveling by car make sure:

- the oxygen equipment is secured in an upright position
- that there is good ventilation to prevent a buildup of high oxygen concentration
- keep sources of combustion away from the oxygen (for example, heaters, dryers, propane gas stoves, etc.)
- always remove the oxygen equipment before attempting to fill it

Bus and Train Travel - Generally speaking, these modes of transportation are receptive to passengers carrying oxygen. However, you must make arrangements prior to leaving



Airline Travel - Generally speaking, if you are traveling by airplane make sure:

- Airlines require a prescription and /or a doctor’s release letter. Several copies may

be required and they must include a statement of need, the liter flow per minute, and in some cases, a statement that the patient is capable of self-administering the oxygen. Occasionally, the airline's medical department will check with your physician prior to leaving.

- Airlines do not allow the patient to carry his or her own oxygen supply on board for use during the flight. The Federal Aviation Administration, however, allows airlines to provide O₂ to passengers who need it, and most airlines will. The price for this service varies. Arrange for oxygen to be available at your destination.
- Altitude may affect your oxygen requirements. Always check with your doctor to see if you are well enough to tolerate higher altitudes.
- Assistance is available for wheel chair use if arranged before-hand, even for persons not using oxygen who have difficulty walking a long distance.

General Problems With Traveling

▪ **Nerves**

The more prepared you are, the less anxiety you are going to feel. Schedule rest times. Take books and games along that will help you relax. Remember to use your controlled breathing techniques during times of shortness of breath.

▪ **Motion Sickness**

Prevention is the key rather than struggling with it once it occurs. Ask your doctor about medications for motion sickness and try to travel in the least bumpy part of the transport.

▪ **Fatigue**

Get enough sleep and rest before the trip. Schedule carefully; do not do too much in one day.

▪ **Jet Lag**

Allow your body to recuperate and relax for a day or two after traveling.

▪ **Constipation**

A mild roughage stimulant like bran may be necessary.

▪ **Too much food or drink**

Too much food may make breathing difficult; watch your diet and the food intake per meal. Remember that alcohol reduces the lung's protection against infection. Altitudes may also worsen alcohol affects.