

9 TRAVELLING AWAY FROM HOME

a) TAKE ENOUGH STEROID COVER TO ALLOW FOR EMERGENCIES

Whenever you are travelling away from home you should carry a medical kit to allow you to manage an emergency situation. The more remote from medical supplies your travels will take you, the more extensive that medical kit needs to be. The situations in which you might need to use your emergency medical kit are discussed in the next section, *Crisis management*. The injection kit and how to use it are also discussed in the next section.

- *For an overnight stay out of town, it is probably sufficient to have a couple of days extra medication on hand plus your injection kit*
- *It is recommended practice to keep a second injection kit in the car as well, to protect you from the effects of shock in the event of a serious motor accident. Where possible this should be stored inside an insulated container so that the temperature changes in the car do not cause it to deteriorate. An insulated container can be ordered through most pharmacists, to protect against heating to more than 25° Celsius (77° Fahrenheit). If it is not possible to store your car injection kit in an insulated container, the best approach is to discard it after 12 months, or sooner if the contents become cloudy or coloured.*

- *For an overseas trip, you need to take enough extra medication to allow for a period of doubling your normal dose should you develop a fever, plus your injection kit and some anti-nausea suppositories or tablets, should you develop a stomach bug.*
- *Always carry your medication - or at least enough to cover you for a week - in your hand luggage when flying abroad. Where a suitcase goes astray, it can often take some time for the airline to recover and return it.*
- *For a trip to remote areas where medical supplies are unsure, you may need to take some intravenous saline and spare sterile needles as well as plenty of medication, anti-nausea tablets or suppositories and your injection kit.*
- *A letter from your doctor explaining why you are carrying syringes and what medical treatment you require in an emergency is also a good idea. If you can get this translated into the language/s of the places you are visiting, this will be even more valuable in an emergency.*

Of course, the chances are that you will never need to use the extra medical supplies you carry around the world with you. However, with Addison's, it is always best to be prepared.

"I have had Addison's for eleven years. I am now 65. I have travelled to 18 different countries; some trips were three weeks long. I have even been travel leader for some groups. Life is too short to stay at home and do nothing. Go for it!" PHYLLIS

b) JET LAG

"As a frequent traveller with my work, I go on many business trips around Europe. Coupled with my love of exotic trekking holidays (Thailand) and the fact that my sister lives in New York, I tend to travel a number of short haul and long haul flights a year. What works for me is to adjust my body clock and the time I take my medication during the flight. You have to remember that flying is exhausting, but after the flight I usually stick to the local time to go to bed." NICK

Unless you find air travel extremely stressful, you should not need to increase your normal medication. However, you do need to calculate your steroid cover so that you have enough to last you through the time shifts while you are travelling on a long distance flight.

The simplest approach to air travel is to keep taking your next hydrocortisone dose five to six hours after the last one, throughout the time you are travelling.

Good general advice for long distance air travel includes:

- *Remember that air travel is dehydrating so you will need to drink more fluids than usual in the air. Drink alcohol, cola drinks, coffee and tea sparingly as these dehydrate the body further. If possible, carry a large bottle of water in your hand luggage. If you forget to bring your own water, be assertive about requesting extra refreshments from the cabin crew.*

- *Walk around the plane as much as possible. Try to get up out of your seat every two hours to stretch your legs and keep the blood flowing.*
- *Many chemist shops now stock knee-length support socks, which can help prevent the formation of blood clots that might lead to a deep-vein thrombosis ('stroke').*
- *Adjust your watch to the time of your destination as the flight begins, and adjust your in-flight activities to that new time zone as well. Sleep through the in-flight meals, if necessary, to get attuned to the new time zone.*
- *Try to book flights that allow you to arrive at your destination in the late afternoon or early evening local time, so that you get a night's sleep at the end of your travelling. Flights which arrive in the early morning local time will leave you tired after travelling but having to stay up all the day before you get a proper night's sleep.*

c) HOT WEATHER

Some Addisonians need to increase their fludrocortisone dose a little once the temperature climbs to around 30° Celsius (85° Fahrenheit) and make sure they eat more salty foods. For example, some people raise their fludrocortisone dose from 0.05mg during the winter months to 0.1mg during the summer, or even 0.2mg during very hot weather.

Eating more salty foods than usual and drinking extra fluids help to keep the body's mineral balance stable in the heat. Carrying a bottle of water with you in your hand luggage is prudent where you are in unusually hot conditions.

Remember that in warmer weather (over 30° Celsius, 85° Fahrenheit) your medication may have a shorter shelf-life than its stated expiry date. Any medication that you carry with you in a bag or pocket should be used within a few days, unless you are storing it inside a fully insulated travelling container. If you will be travelling in areas where the temperature is consistently higher than 40° Celsius (105° Fahrenheit), we suggest you contact the manufacturers of your medication to check how its shelf-life is likely to be affected.

"I have done well, in that I work full time, have continued with my sports and activities and generally lived life as I did before. There are precautions I take with heat and travelling but changing my lifestyle never entered my mind." GWEN