

Traveller Information Sheets



Insulin dependent diabetes

Travellers with insulin dependent diabetes mellitus are at risk of hypoglycaemic or hyperglycaemia episodes during travel, especially long haul flights.

At the travel consultation

Ensure the practitioner issues a letter, on their letterhead stationary stating the reasons;

- For the traveller carrying needles / syringes / sharps containers in their carryon luggage
- The nature of their condition and need for regular meals.

Activity in the air craft

Travellers on insulin are at risk of increased insulin levels due to inactivity during long haul flights. This can be controlled by;

- Changes to the insulin dose
- Changes to carbohydrate intake.

This should be discussed with your doctor at the pre travel consultation

Management of insulin doses across time zones may require adjustment such as:

- Sliding scale including meals for short acting insulin and continuing on the same dose of long acting insulin
- Altering the long acting dose of insulin depending on the hours of flight.

Travellers should be well aware of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia. Sometimes bring a meal forward or having an appropriate snack will help avoid any problems with sugar control.

It is very important that diabetics avoid alcohol consumption, as this will add to sugar instability during the flight.

Reference

Leggat P, Goldsmid J 2002, *Primer of Travel Medicine*, ACTM Publications, Brisbane QLD, pp.86-87