

Hints and tips 2

Travelling at home and abroad

This card summarises travel tips for a person with Parkinson's disease (PD) – for full details, see the main website.

General travel tips

- Plan routes and stopovers – allowing time for extra tiredness, and for regular stops to stretch aching muscles or go to the toilet.
- Find out as much as you can about the facilities available at your destination before you set off, e.g., will stairs be a problem?
- Ask your doctor to provide a letter describing your condition and the medications that you take – in case treatment is needed at your destination.
- When you pack your medication, be sure to pack more than you need in more than one bag – just in case your stay is longer than expected or you get separated from some part of your luggage.
- Before you depart, ask your doctor to find out the name and address of a GP and/or hospital at your destination – in case of emergencies.
- Keep your medication in its original labelled container, so that it can be easily identified.
- If the service is available in your country, ask your doctor/nurse to help arrange a disabled car sticker so that you can park closer to amenities, and reduce the amount of walking needed.
- Contact PD organisations for general or specific queries.

Booking transport and accommodation

- Book your transport well in advance, and let the travel company know about any special requirements, e.g., extra leg room, assistance getting onto the transport.
- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for all the help you need. For example, there can be a lot of walking at either end of a journey, and if use of a wheelchair would make things easier, then you should request one.
- Ask the travel company about the assistance they can provide, and compare several different companies. Ask if there will be extra charges for these services.
- Note that travel insurance may be more expensive, or more difficult to obtain for a person with PD. Read the policy carefully as sometimes cover will be offered for accidents and illness, but may exclude PD.
- Find out about car parking, and how close this is to the transport terminal.
- Booking early is also useful when arranging accommodation, so that you can ask for a ground floor room, or one that is close to a lift.

Travelling abroad

- It may be useful to learn the phrase "I have Parkinson's disease. Please allow me time," in the language of the country that you are visiting, or have it written down on a piece of card. The EPDA has a pocket-sized 'PD doc' that can be individually customised online to include this phrase in one of 25 languages.
 - Keep your medication with you in your hand luggage at all times.
 - Check with your doctor or insurance company about your health insurance and what it covers in your destination country.
 - Contact the embassy of the country you are visiting to ask about their regulations for bringing prescription medications into the country – this can prevent any problems at customs, and is another reason for asking your doctor to prepare a signed letter describing your medication needs. Some countries also require prescription medications to be in their original labelled containers.
 - Medications are sometimes known by different brand names in different countries, therefore it can be helpful to find out the name used in your destination country before you travel. Information about these different names can be found on the EPDA website: www.parkinsonsdecisionaid.eu.com/medInfo
- If you need a syringe to deliver your medication, you will also need to check on regulations in individual countries. If you are travelling by air, explain your situation to the airline – especially if you will need to use a syringe during the flight.
 - If you need vaccinations to travel to your destination country, ask your doctor if these are safe to have in combination with your PD medication.
 - If you are travelling to a different time zone, think about how you are going to plan your medication schedule.
 - It may be helpful to make contact with a PD organisation in the country to which you are travelling before you go. Details of many local and national organisations are held by the EPDA, who can be contacted by telephone/fax: +44 (0) 1732 457683; by e-mail: info@epda.eu.com; or by visiting the website: www.epda.eu.com

